



## Window on Jordan

### Miss Jordan pageant: A Zionist ploy nipped in the bud!

By Star Staff Writer

NOW THAT we have the elections controversy is well behind us, attention is now focusing on a new challenge: aborting plans to elect Miss Jordan! Seriously, popular forces are being called upon to rally behind the national campaign to force an unnamed women club to quit plans to hold a Miss Jordan pageant. *Al Sabeel* weekly sounded the alarm last week when it broke the news and surveyed numerous Islamist deputies and figures among others, all of whom condemned the plan as:

- A Zionist ploy to destroy the values of the Umma
- A blind imitation that violates our traditions

- A degradation of women in society
- UnIslamic
- A step towards bringing down the family and society...

and many other opposing views. It is still uncertain how credible *Al Sabeel* sources are. But one thing is for sure. The news made the main headline in the weekly newspaper. At this moment one can only sympathize with the editors of the now defunct weeklies who would have cashed on the news as well. This is a serious development. If it checked out, it is also the stuff that sells newspapers and keeps people busy each day. It is the stuff that makes national campaigns. It is the stuff that

takes up most issues when people meet and trade gossip. It is good debating material for people now that winter is setting in and there isn't much to do after 5 in the evening.

A Miss Jordan event would certainly put our society through a difficult test. Just imagine if the event actually takes place, in spite of objections. The would-be Miss Jordan would have to endure the negative publicity. But let's assume she does.

She then has to prepare herself for the Miss Umma pageant next year. And then let's assume that our Miss Jordan takes it upon herself to go all the way and contest the international event.

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Miss Jordan, allow me to present Mr Jordan!!



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AMMAN, 11 — 17 DECEMBER 1997, VOLUME 8, NUMBER 29, 350 FILS

## King's letter to Majali underlines Jordan's position on Palestinian issues

By Raed Al Abed

MONTHS OF roller-coaster politics have put relations between Jordan and Israel, on the one hand, and Jordan and the Palestinians, on the other, in an unenviable position. Jordan's trust in the Israeli government of Benjamin Netanyahu has been shattered while its commitment to supporting the Palestinian leadership has grown stronger. This is how observers explain the recent letter that His Majesty King Hussein sent to Prime Minister Abdel Salam Majali in which he clarified again Jordan's position vis-a-vis the Palestinian cause.

In recent weeks the Palestinian leadership expressed its anxiety over what it claimed were high-level talks between Crown Prince Hassan and Israeli Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon. The Palestinians claim Sharon presented the Jordanian side with maps detailing Israel's intended withdrawal plans in the final phase of negotiations. Such plans have been rejected by the Palestinians. The Palestinians also wanted to know the nature of the talks that were held in London last month between the King and Netanyahu.

The Israeli media exploited what it termed as the "secret talks" between Jordan and Israel claiming that Jordan opposes the establishment of a Palestinian state because such a state will form a threat to Jordan's security.

In order to clarify the Jordanian position again, the King sent a letter to his Prime Minister, which many considered as an agenda for this government especially in dealing with the Palestinians, and in outlining the Jordan role in the Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations. The letter, which dealt with a number of important issues, reiterated Jordan's complete support for the Palestinians.

Some Israeli officials justified their opposition to the creation of a Palestinian state



Ramallah and his talks with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Majali's visit succeeded in clarifying the Jordanian position and calming tension. But according to some observers, many issues remained open especially Jordan's position on Jerusalem and the refugees. There are those who believe the letter may have left many issues unresolved and may lead to increased tension between the PNA and Jordan in the future.

The issue of Jerusalem was the most important part of the letter. The letter states that Jerusalem is an "Arab land" and that the term of reference to the status of Jerusalem is the peace process. "This is not acceptable," said Dr. Labib Kamhawi, a political analyst, "because the terms of reference are the international resolutions and the right of the Palestinians as confirmed and accepted by these resolutions and not the peace process."

On the other hand, the letter talks about Jerusalem as an "Arab land". Kamhawi suggested that "Jerusalem is a Palestinian Arab land, and that the deletion of the term 'Palestinian' underlines Jordan's own interest in preserving its special role over the administration of places of worship in the city."

In his letter, the King clearly called for a priority in presenting the special role of Jordan over the holy shrines in Jerusalem during the final status of negotiations.

This special Jordanian role in Jerusalem may clash with Palestinian demands for political sovereignty over Jerusalem during the upcoming negotiations.

"When we talk about Jerusalem, we are talking about political sovereignty for the Palestinians, freedom of worship and accessibility to holy places. But custodianship does not replace sovereignty," Kamhawi said.

Arafat Hejazi, a veteran journalist,

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DEERHUNTER: Tip: Forster, in full camouflage, takes aim with his longbow. Later, he brought down his prey, a sika deer. Hunting is still a popular sport in the United States. (Photo by Frank Johnston.)

## ADD, hot on the trail of antiquities' smugglers

By Ibtisam Awadat

Special to The Star  
"ONE OF the biggest cases I remember, was when we arrested people trying to smuggle 27 mosaic pieces, that is 20 square meters from the north of Jordan," Col. Nazih Al Sharaydeh, the director of the Anti-Narcotics Dept., (ADD) told The Star.

"A section dealing with the crime of archaeological theft was established in our department back on 1 May 1996," Mr Sharaydeh added.

The duties of this section is in fight the trading in archaeological artifacts (which has been made illegal in 1976) by gathering information about those involved in the field.

"We also gather information about undiscovered archaeological sites and inform the Dept. of Antiquities about the possibilities of such finds," Col. Sharaydeh continues.

"The last discovery, that of a Byzantine church in Ajloun, we found last Thursday."

figure is expected to increase to 120,000," said the Director-General of the department, Dr. But President Mohammed Kha-

This is in addition to the fact that the punishment for those who trade or smuggle archaeological artifacts could be as much as three years to prison.

"Seventy percent of what we confiscate are real antiquities, and the rest are fake, but even those [people caught] can be prosecuted for falsification and fraud."

"The pieces which are found are sent to the Antiquities Dept. and a part is withheld by our department."

In a small hall down at the Anti-Narcotics Dept., artifacts of all kinds such as statues from stone and pottery in bronze which come in different shapes and sizes are kept.

There are also currencies in gold and silver as well as a very old tablet with an inscription from the holy Koran.

The ADD works very closely with the Tourism Ministry's Antiquities Dept. whose purpose is to protect and rebuild ancient sites.

"We have 28,000 registered archaeological sites, but the

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French Page  
Un sourire autour du monde

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## Islamic summit offers differing views on West

Combined agency reports

TEHRAN—Iran opened an Islamic summit meeting Tuesday designed to promote unity among the world's 1 billion Muslims. But the host country's leaders offered starkly contrasting views on relations between Islam and the West, underscoring deep divisions within Iran itself. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the country's supreme leader, lashed out at Western powers in a fiery opening speech, targeting in particular the United States, which he accused of "global arrogance" and assorted sins against Islam.

He denounced what he called the "global Zionist media," blasted the US-sponsored Middle East peace process as "unjust, arrogant, contemptuous and finally illogical," and warned the United States to pull its warships out of the Gulf, which he described as "an Islamic sea."

termi, a moderate cleric elected last May in an unexpected landslide, made an entirely different impression, speaking of the need for tolerance and understanding among people of different faiths. He emphasized the need for civil society and rule of law, called for the protection of religious minorities and, perhaps most surprising, urged his fellow Islamic leaders to learn from the West if not to emulate it.

"Our era is an era of preponderance of Western culture and civilization, whose understanding is imperative," said Khatami, a turbaned mullah and architect of Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution who lived for a time in Germany. "Undoubtedly, we will only succeed in moving forward... if we... utilize the positive scientific, technological and social accomplishments of Western civilization, a stage we must inevitably go through to

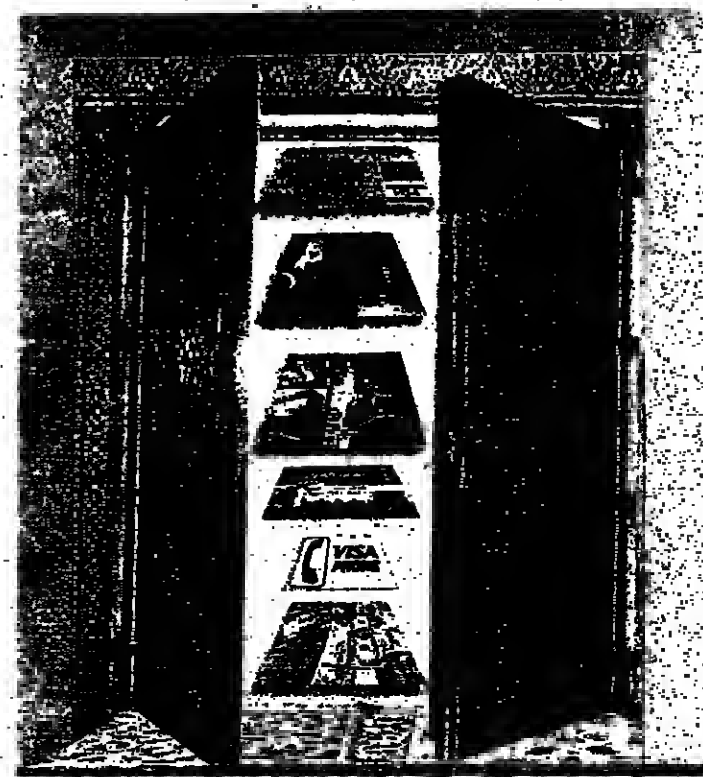
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## Lebanese Americans return to Beirut, a city in transition

By Marjorie Miller

BEIRUT, Lebanon—For a city brought to its knees in the 1980s by car bombs, gun battles and kidnappings, the few sticks of dynamite that were tossed into the American University of Beirut compound recently did not qualify as a serious attack.

But with the university's next president in town, the blast did strike many Beirut residents as a serious warning.

"Someone wanted to scare the Americans," said Adnan Iskandar, an AUB political science professor. "We don't know who did it. Whoever it is, they are not happy with the opening of Lebanon to Americans."

Since US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright lifted a 10-year ban on travel to Lebanon in July, hundreds of US citizens have visited this scarred city that is undergoing a stunning rebirth. They are Lebanese Americans returning to

their roots, business executives bidding for a piece of the reconstruction pie and longtime residents seeking old haunts.

John Waterbury, who takes over as president of AUB in January, was on a scouting mission to Beirut when the dynamite blew out windows at the university in October.

While concerned, Waterbury said the blast did not derail his plan to be the first AUB chief living on the banyan-shaded campus since 1984, when then-President Malcolm Kerr was gunned down there during Lebanon's 15-year civil war and wave of anti-American violence.

"For the time being, unless there is a repetition or escalation, I don't anticipate any change in my plans," Waterbury said in a telephone interview from New Jersey.

Just how safe Beirut may be for Americans such as Waterbury is a question for which no one seems

to have a simple answer. In part, that is the nature of Beirut itself, a city with a violent past and promising future but no clearly defined present.

Part Sarajevo, part reunited Berlin, Beirut appears through a veil of construction dust. The past, a civil war that claimed about 150,000 lives, is embedded in the pocked shells of apartment buildings and hotel carcasses along the Green Line that once divided the city's Muslim and Christian halves.

The future is on display in cardboard models of a 445-acre commercial and financial center that is to be raised on the ruins of this ancient Phoenician city—one of the most ambitious urban renewal projects ever attempted.

But for now, downtown Beirut looks like an unfinished movie set, with wrecking balls and cranes rising from empty lots where 500 buildings have been leveled to remake a city once known as

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World Report

هكذا من الأصل



# Trials and tribulations of a Jordanian antiquities collector

By Ibtisam Awadat  
Star Staff Writer

"JORDAN IS a national museum, wherever you dig you find an archaeological piece," Mr. Ali Mahadeen, who is among four ex-archaeological dealers in Jordan, told *The Star*.

"I began to work and trade in antiquities back in 1965,

after two years, I became a licensed trader, but because of the 1967 (June) war, tourism was badly affected and so was our business."

However, the final blow came in 1976 when the government passed a law prohibiting anyone from trading in archaeological artifacts.

"In that year, the government notified me that it is considering all of the antiquities' pieces that I gathered for the last 10 years as private collectors' items." He added that this in turn meant that "I was to keep them home."

And as a result, Mr. Mahadeen, who possessed three antiquities' shops for buying and selling in Karak, Jerusalem and Jericho, had to put away more than 15,000 pieces in three store houses in Karak. He said that "my house couldn't possibly take in all these pieces."

And today they are still stored away. "Our national heritage has been locked away for more than 20 years without being exhibited or studied," he



Head of a 2000-year-old basalt statue from the Roman age

laments.

His vast collection, as documents from the Department of Antiquities prove, include paper and leather manuscripts, potteries, signets, jewels and glassworks. These are in addition to the silver, gold and bronze currencies from the Canaanite, Greek, Roman and

Islamic ages. Mr. Mahadeen said that he possesses coins that are more than 2000 years old.

Last July, two committees that included experts from the Department of Antiquities and foreign archaeological institutes in Jordan were formed to examine the private collections. It included such eminent experts from the British Institute of Archaeology in Amman, and from Mu'ta University who went down to examine Mr. Mahadeen's private collection.

"Those experts concluded that the collection was too valuable to be locked away and recommended that it should be taken over by a public agency like the Dept. of Antiquities. But Mahadeen's headache was just beginning. The experts put a tag price of only JD 250,000 for part of the collection. Despite the fact of Mr. Mahadeen's claim that his

collection is worth more than JD 3 millions, he accepted a knocked down price of 30 percent, and said that he would accept just slightly over JD 1 million.

"To be more understanding I agreed to take an initial payment of JD 250,000, and to receive the rest of the money in three years," Mr. Mahadeen explained.

This issue went right up to the Prime Minister who in turn sent an official request to the Ministry of Finance to earmark the amount as an expense to be added to the 1998 national budget. However the Ministry later claimed that they can't afford to pay the money.

And today the destiny of his archaeological treasures continue to remain ambiguous. But Mr. Mahadeen is not giving up. He says that the love of antiquities is in his blood. "It's almost an addiction. I read all the international archaeological magazines, and I attend all international exhibitions, the last one opened by His Majesty King Hussein in Paris in June," Mr. Mahadeen continued. "I love this profession, and sometimes when I enter one of the storehouses at nine o'clock in the morning, I forget myself and stay till three o'clock in the afternoon."

Mr. Mahadeen presented archaeological works as gifts to Jordanian Universities and to our embassies abroad to exhibit our heritage to the whole world.

"It's been a long time, but I want to solve this problem legally. I know there are other ways which could be used, and I know of all the methods of selling, but I want to do it the right way, this is our national heritage."

## ADD, hot on the trail of antiquities' smugglers



Col. Al Sharaydeh

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Chazi Pisch.

"In Amman, we've begun the restoration projects, the first being in Al Qal'a Mountain (Amman Citadel) where we are rebuilding the external walls and the towers which surround the Castle," Dr. Pisch added. "At the same site, we have also the Omayyad Palace which will be rebuilt in cooperation with a Spanish team and from Spanish financing."

His department finished rebuilding the Music Theater near the Roman Theater in downtown Amman this year. The opening was inaugurated by the National Music Conservatory, and is expected to stage musical concerts.

"Outside the capital, we have an active role in Irbid. There is, for example, a building from the Ottoman era called 'Al Saraya' which was used as a prison, but later presented to the Antiquities department." He pointed out that its being restored into a national museum. Other restoration projects include the ancient places in Karak, where the engineers from the Natural Resources Authority are trying to strengthen the walls of the Karak Castle, in Shoubak and in Jerash also where the Antiquities Depart-

ment completed the restoration of the North Theater and is now used as part of staging different cultural activities during the Jerash Festival.

More closer to home, however, the authorities are involved in the rebuilding of the Sabeel El Houreyat in downtown Amman.

"There are many ancient sites in Jordan and it's difficult to keep constant supervision," Dr. Pisch states.

"About private collections, especially those that are in possession of traders that were formerly authorized to trade, we formed two committees and asked, through advertisements, all those people to register the archaeological pieces they have with our department."

The Director-General said that 26 collections were registered to protect them from being smuggled out of the country or sold. He told *The Star* that according to the law, antiquities can be kept in houses as long as they are registered in the department. "We try our best to buy at least the unique pieces [of these collections], while for the duplicated ones we allow any establishment to buy some of them but we must be informed of this."

Archaeological treasures, the law states, is anything that dates back before the year 1700.

## King's letter to Majali

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nallat and a writer on Palestinian affairs, said "The timing of the King's letter may have created uncertainty. The letter expresses concern over the Palestinian cause as it faces more hurdles." But Hejazi blames the Palestinian leadership for these uncertainties.

"The PNA involved itself in many agreements where it gave many concessions to Israel," he said. "Officially Jordan cannot denounce these agreements, but it feels that these agreements are the reason behind the tragic situation that the Palestinians find themselves in today," Hejazi added.

However, Kamhawji said that regardless of any misgivings one may have about Oslo, this does not mean that the Arabs should add to Palestinian misery.

On the whole, the letter, which aims at confronting the general mood, followed the King's speech in the opening of Parliament. Kamhawji said the letter has not confronted Palestinian and Jordanian worries and may have aggravated the mood.

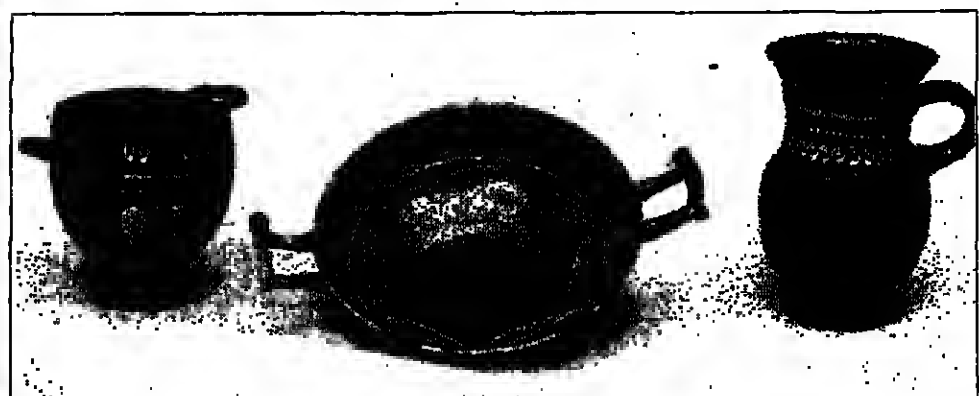
The issue of the refugees is one, irrespective of their geographic location, and we believe that the issue of refugees is part and parcel of the issue of the right of return for the Palestinians. We are not talking about the refugees alone, but about the Palestinian diaspora at large," he said.

Mr. Hejazi disagrees. "Again the Oslo agreements ignored the substantial issues, which Netanyahu is trying to by-pass."

Oslo failed to put conditions on the building of settlements which is the core of all changes that Israel is practicing in the Occupied Territories. This letter confirms the concerns and obligations of King Hussein towards the Palestinian cause," he said.



Pottery statue with a bronze circle on top that dates back to the Roman age



Vases from the Greek age

## Announcement

Entries for the Theory Examination of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music will be accepted from 13 to 22 December 1997. The Theory Examination will be held on Saturday, 28 February 1998.

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ASSOCIATED BOARD  
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## Miss Jordan

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Imagine then if she wins and becomes Miss World. What then? What a scandal!

These and other scenarios are indeed worrying. But we can rest assured that popular forces will manage to scare off any party or parties, including the Zionists, who dream of bringing this shameful tradition into our country. We can rest assured that no Miss Jordan will ever emerge in our midst. Our values and traditions will win the day.

Some 20 years ago, another social group announced that it was hoping to organize a Miss Jordan competition. A public outcry ensued and the event was buried there and then. The same fate will recur this time as well.

Now that dealt a lethal blow to the Miss Jordan conspiracy, we can direct our attention again to the same prosaic but persistent problems that trouble our society like teenage crime and delinquency among others. Can we launch a campaign to ban these as well? ■

## Islamic summit

Continued from page 1

reach the future."

His principle theme was how the world's 1 billion Muslims could create a new "Islamic civil society" in which tyranny would be banned, minorities would be protected, the rule of law would prevail, and governments would exist as servants of the people. "Understanding, planning and common endeavor" are the keys to helping Islamic countries achieve their place in an emerging pluralistic world order that, "God willing, will not be the monopoly of any single power," he told the delegates here, whose countries stretch from West Africa to Southeast Asia.

Khatami called it unfortunate that certain "expansionist tendencies" try to make "an imaginary enemy of Islam." To counter them, Muslim countries should continually strive for peace and security at the regional and global levels and seek



Participants at the Tehran meeting, Tuesday

ways to build confidence, he said, adding: "The world needs peace and tranquility. It is obvious, however, that for peace to be lasting, it should be just and honorable."

On Tuesday, the Clinton ad-

ministration renewed a call for dialogue with Iran, which it still accuses of supporting terrorism and secretly developing nuclear weapons. State Department spokesman James Foley said the US has "long been open to a dialogue with the Iranian government. Our only stipulation has been that such a dialogue take place with an authorized representative of the government and that it be acknowledged publicly."

Foley, who volunteered the statement on policy toward a dialogue with Tehran, during the daily State Department briefing, said the United States has "no quarrel with the Iranian people" and is "not seeking to change the nature of its fundamentalist Islamic government."

The timing of the statement seems to indicate the Clinton administration is feeling left out in the cold while many of its closest Arab allies, including senior officials from Egypt and Saudi Arabia, are in Tehran for the IOC conference.

The two opening speeches of the Iranian leaders were symptomatic of a deepening power struggle in Iran between religious hard-liners and moderates, led by Khatami, whose advocacy of greater cultural and personal freedom has won him widespread support among women, young people and educated elites. Rarely, however, have those differences been aired in such a public manner. The two men spoke on the opening day of the eighth summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which brings together ministers, princes, heads of state and other dignitaries from 55 Islamic countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

The presence of so many foreign leaders, many of them close allies of the West, has, in the view of observers here, significantly boosted Iran's international prestige at the expense of the United States, which accuses Iran of sponsoring international terrorism and has sought to isolate the Islamic republic through a trade embargo and diplomatic means. Iran is also seeking to use the three-day summit to improve relations with neighboring

Arab countries, which have long accused its leaders of packaging their revolution for export. Among the Arab leaders in attendance Tuesday were Syrian President Hafez Assad, Crown Prince Hassan, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah. He is the highest-ranking Saudi official to visit Iran since the fall of the American-backed shah in 1979.

The heir to the Saudi throne, said on one "should try to dictate to his Muslim brothers how to think and how to work." He condemned as loathsome and barbaric "heinous crimes being committed in the name of Islam" under the pretext of the desire for an Islamic form of government. "Are these killers who slit the throats of their victims to be trusted? Are they qualified to create an Islamic state?" he asked.

Arab turnout was much higher than for the US-sponsored economic conference last month in Doha, with the aim of forging ties between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Most Arab countries boycotted that conference to protest what they regard as the failure of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to carry out peace accords signed with the Palestinians.

Despite the broad cross-section of participants, Khatami made no effort to temper his views, blaming the West for most of the ills afflicting the Muslim world. "The Western materialistic civilization is directing everyone toward materiality, while money, gluttony, and carnal desires are made the greatest aspirations," he declared. "As in the past, today Islam is the only remedial, curative and savior angel."

He accused the United States, in particular, of doing everything it could to undermine Iran's revolution and poison its relations with its neighbors. "For 18 years now, the political designers of arrogance are breathing their poisonous breath to make our neighbors in the Gulf fearful of Islamic Iran," he said, adding pointedly, "I declare that Islamic Iran poses no threat to any Islamic country." ■

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## JORDAN

W E E K



**An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar**



### Rally!

There was a huge rally outside parliament, Sunday. Demonstrators were demanding the death penalty for those who attempted to rape and then killed a nine-year-old girl in Jerash. The school girl, who is in the fourth grade is named Ola. In a memorandum distributed during the rally, the father of the girl demanded the death penalty for the murderers so it would serve as an example and a deterrent to others. In the memo, the father directly addressed His Majesty King Hussein, pleading with him that, as the father of every Jordanian family, he hoped that the King will allow the execution of the death penalty. However the assassins, who are below 18 years of age, might not be subject to the death penalty according to the law. The juveniles who commit such crimes are normally sent to a rehabilitation center which legal experts say is not for more than a few years. But lawyers elaborate that in this case, the sentence passed would befit the crime. If one of the youths who only participated in the attempted rape, sentence will be passed accordingly. If on the other hand one of the youths took part in the attempted rape and murder charges, then he will also be subject to a harsher sentence.



### Haj Season

The Haj season is upon us once again. About 15,000 people registered initially for the Haj season this year. The Ministry of Awqaf has already designated 43 centers throughout the Kingdom for the purpose of registration.

### First Salafi in Lower House

The latest phenomena in the new Lower House is Sheikh Mohammad Rafat who in a recent interview came out with what some may consider as startling views. A newly elected deputy, who won a seat in the last elections for Baqa' in the Balqa' Constituency. Although, a member of the Islamic Brotherhood which he quit in 1994, Mr Rafat is an independent Islamist who says that there is no need for Islamic or other nationalistic/religious political parties. For a self proclaimed Salafi (Muslim fundamentalist), he has a very pragmatic, some would claim weird views about the role of state and government. Although he doesn't support the current peace process, he said he would be prepared to visit the Israeli Knesset and sit down with its members. He added that he wouldn't consider such action as normalizing with the Israelis.

### United wins

The 'united list' has won a landslide majority in the last election of the seven sections (Construction, Applied Engineering, Civil, Chemical, Mechanical, Electrical, Mining) that comprise the Jordanian Engineering Association. Of the 49 seats, the 'whites and the greens' came home scott free, winning 44 seats. Two seats were won by an additional 'green list' that refused to unite and two independents. Although the elections were characterized by its low turnout, the Islamist win is seen as giving the thumbs up to the anti-normalization policies with regards to relations with Israel.

### Early New Year

The New Year celebrations this year are promising to be a lackluster event. Because of the holy month of Ramadan that is almost certain to coincide with the New Year, the government has sent a memorandum to every hotel and club reminding them that they may not serve alcohol during the duration of the annual feast. It is because of this, that two hotels in Jordan have decided to celebrate the New Year four days early. Hotel Intercontinental is offering an "unforgettable evening" with singer Kahim Al Saher while the Regency Hotel is offering an evening with the Lebanese singer Hiam Al Said and US belly dancer Topaz. The memorandum asks those establishments wanting to offer New Year's Eve parties on the proper date to do so "in complete discretion and without any media publicity."

### Four expelled after demo

The Senate of the Balqa' University has expelled four students from the Polytechnic in Zenqa which is affiliated to the University. The expulsions come after a week-long strike which students staged at the end of last month. Two further students were suspended for a full year from the Polytechnic. Further the Senate has issued 'final warnings' to eight students and 'first warnings' to three others. Although the Chancellor of Balqa' University says that everything is back to normal, students describe the situation as tense.

### Getting closer still

We could now have Israeli travel companies right on our very doorstep. According to the Israeli Maariv, one of the travel companies there, has been given permission to operate a bus service between Tel Aviv and Amman on a daily basis.

### Private universities

There are 18 universities in the country, 12 of these are run by the private sector and the rest by the government. The Ministry of Education has started to give licences for private universities since 1989. It is pointed out that each student in public universities costs the government more than JD 1300 annually of which he pays only JD 400, but it's skies the limit for private universities.

A seminar on the French experience in urban services will be held on 15 December at the headquarters of the Jordan Construction Contractors Association. The seminar, which is under the patronage of the Minister of Planning, Dr. Rima Khalaf, and is organized by the French Embassy in Amman is concentrating on the private-public sector cooperation in the field of urban services. A full French delegation that include 15 experts from the banking, engineering and industrial fields will make contributions at the seminar. On 16 December there is also a roundtable discussions between the French experts and their Jordanian counterparts.



His Majesty King Hussein receives Saudi Prince Fahd bin Abdul Aziz and his son Prince Khalid bin Walid at his house, Bab Al Salam, Monday. During the meeting King Hussein conferred on the Prince the Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order for his role in the economic field and especially in his participation in economic and investment projects in Jordan. Prince Fahd said that without a doubt that the investment climate in Jordan is encouraging. He has many investments in this country, especially in the banking and tourism fields.

## Annual budget unveiled for '98, GDP expected to maintain 6% growth

AMMAN (Star)—Jordan's 1998 budget is estimated at JD 1987 million, an increase of 7.6% from the 1997 estimate, with a deficit of JD 37 million, or 1.9 percent of total expenses. Minister of Finance Sulaiman Hafez presented the 1998 draft budget law to the Lower House on Wednesday. He predicted economic growth to continue at about 6 percent in 1998. The growth domestic product for this year is estimated at 5.3 percent, compared with 5.2 in 1996.



Hafez

Among the main indicators for next year as outlined by the minister:

- GDP growth at 6%
- Rate of total consumption to the GDP will drop to about 86%, while rate of total investments will be 33%.
- Budget deficit will make up 3.2% of GDP.
- General price index will be around 3%.
- National exports will grow at higher rates than imports and trade deficit will be around 29% of GDP.
- The budget for independent public corporations has been estimated at JD 600 million.
- The minister said internal revenues in the 1998 budget are estimated at JD 1704.3 million, an increase of 7.2% from 1997. He added that total revenues, including grants and foreign assistance, are estimated at JD 1950 million.

finance external and internal loans in addition to the budget deficit.

Mr Hafez said Jordan's foreign debt has been reduced from \$7615 million in 1991 to \$6627, about 83% of the GDP, by the end of October 1997. He said a series of measures that included buying or transforming some debts and rescheduling others succeeded in lowering the interest rate from 6.6% in 1991 to about 4.8% this year. He added that this also reduced payments on loans from \$530 million in 1996 to \$434 million in 1997.

He said as a result of these measures, external debt service was reduced from 9.8% of total exports in 1996 to about 7.7% this year, which eased pressure on the balance of payment and allowed for the building of foreign reserves.

The cost of living index during the first 11 months of this year went up by 2.7 percent compared with the same period last year. However the index is expected to go up to 3 percent as of the end of this year, against 6.5 percent last year.

## Jordan expels Iraqi diplomats

THE EXECUTIONS of four Jordanian students in Iraq, Monday, are being denounced both on the official and popular levels in Jordan. The dramatic step is seen as a sever blow to Jordan-Iraqi relations.

Walid Mohammad Tawfiq Nseir, Sa'ad Yousef Ali Al Douji, Salah Yousef Al Douji and Rizek Bishara Rizek were charged of smuggling auto spareparts. Minister of Interior Nabil Rashid said that despite contacts between senior Jordanian officials and their Iraqi counterparts, Iraq went ahead and carried out the executions.

"What is making us more angry is that the value of smuggled parts, as claimed by the Iraqi authorities, does not exceed JD 620," Mr Rashid said. According to the law such a violation should only receive a fine or imprisonment.

The government in Amman acted swiftly. First it recalled Jordan's Charge d'affaires in Baghdad, Adel Sweidan, and later on it expelled seven Iraqi diplomats from the Kingdom.

The four students were arrested by the Iraqi authorities at the beginning of the year and charged of smuggling. However, they were later released by an amnesty, but the Iraqi authorities re-arrested them.

Meanwhile members of the Lower House of Parliament are up in arms at the executions. They point out that Jordan must now take the stiffest measures against Iraq. It is not clear whether the latest government action of expulsion will be enough to calm tempers in the country.

## Lebanese Americans return to Beirut, a city in transition

Continued from page 1

the Paris of the Middle East. A few patrician facades stand over the rubble, surrounded by scaffolding and mesh drapes to contain their debris. Like the former East Berlin, it is in a state of transition.

Camouflaged tanks, with tarpaulins over their guns, are parked discreetly off to the side. The threat today seems to come from bulldozers, jackhammers and reckless honking cars.

In spite of this chaos, the city is open and eager to please. It beckons tourists into glistening shopping centers with Armani and Donna Karan fashions. By day, the Mediterranean Sea is an alluring blue, and by night the city wows visitors with stylish restaurants and exotic clubs.

Some Lebanese still carry a grudge against the United States for its support of Christian factions during the civil war. Many resent what they see as unquestioning US support for Israel, whose soldiers Hezbollah guerrillas are fighting to oust from the south.

US officials recall the 1983 attack on a Marine Corps compound near Beirut that killed 241 Americans, the assault on the US Embassy the same year, the killing of Kerr, the kidnapping of journalist Terry Anderson and other attacks. In filling the travel ban, Alhright said she still considered the country dangerous for US citizens but had decided travel should no longer be illegal.

The State Department then issued a warning that only Americans with "compelling reasons" should consider visiting Lebanon. Those who do, the advisory says, should avoid the southern suburbs of Beirut, the Bekaa Valley and southern Lebanon—strongholds of Hezbollah.

"Americans have in the past been targets of numerous terrorist attacks in Lebanon. The perpetrators of these attacks are still present in Lebanon, and retain the ability to act," it says.

For many American citizens visiting Beirut, this view

seems out of sync with reality. They say they feel safe and that the US government is stuck in the past.

In fact, there were opportunities to attack Americans if extremists had wanted to. Thousands of US citizens have circumvented the ban and traveled to Lebanon in the past few years by asking Lebanese officials to issue them visas on loose paper instead of with telltale stamps in their passports. Some businesspeople, working through front companies, and journalists were in the country, as well as diplomats and a few rebellious tourists.

Hezbollah, or the Party of God, which is believed to have been responsible for many of the suicide attacks and kidnappings of the 1980s, has evolved into a legal political party that has members in the National Assembly and a militia fighting Israeli soldiers. Hezbollah leaders deny any connection with past attacks and insist that they have no intention of targeting Americans now.

"We have a certain position against the American administration, but we have nothing against the American people," said Sheikh Atallah Ibrahim, a Hezbollah spokesman. "We support anything that would develop Lebanon from an economic point of view."

Most Americans are skeptical, however, and those who do make the journey in Lebanon generally feel they have a compelling reason for doing so.

Halifa Hammami, 32, was born in Lebanon to a British mother and Palestinian father. Ignoring the advice of embassy officials that she change hotels every week or so, Hammami, who recently moved back to Beirut from the United States, began searching for an apartment to rent and looking for her past.

She grew up in the United States on her parents' memories of Beirut as a seaside paradise with chic cafes and genteel living. They told her that after her birth they buried her umbilical cord beneath a tree to ensure that she would always be surrounded by the vitality of Beirut. Hammami hunted for the tree.

"It was gone. There was this modern high-rise, a big, brand-new apartment building that was empty," she said.

"Dr. Ameez Razzouk, a Loma Linda, Calif., heart surgeon, is another native who returned to Beirut last month for the first time in 22 years, traveling with a group of Lebanese Americans on a trip arranged by the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee.

"I think Americans who do not come here are missing out. This is safer than the streets of Los Angeles. The Lebanese mentality is one of hospitality, openness to all people. They have a lot of history to share, a lot of culture and beauty," he said.

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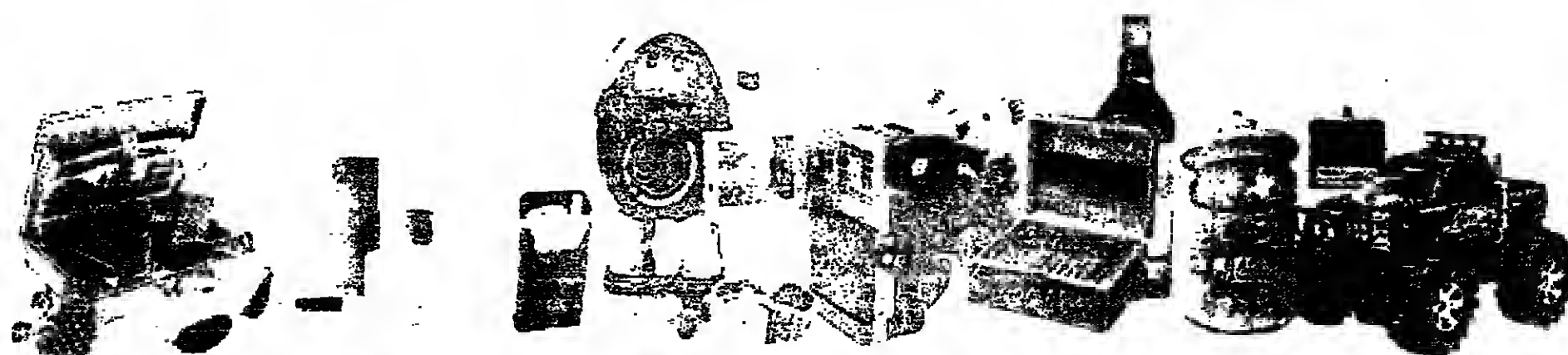
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Lurie's NewsCartoon



(News Item: A conference on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions began in Kyoto, Japan, where delegates from more than 160 nations are discussing how to share the burden of the complex task. There is concern that results will be limited.)

## Our Say...

### The message from Tehran

THERE IS brave and responsible talk coming from Tehran, where the 55-member Organization of Islamic Conference is holding a three-day summit. There was nothing surprising in the tone and language of Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khatami, who bombarded the United States, Israel and the western powers for their hostility to Muslim countries and causes.

But the interesting remarks came from the host country's President Mohammed Khatami, who presented a different view of the future of Muslim relations with the rest of the world, especially the West.

The Tehran summit is already creating a new mood in the Muslim world and elsewhere even before its conclusion. There is a new spirit prevailing; one of moderation, solidarity and realism in dealing with the challenges that face over 1 billion Muslims around the world today.

Tolerance, moderation and cultural dialogue are all crucial elements in the process of our struggle to communicate, understand and be understood and achieve development. But coming from the new Iranian leadership, the new approach is worth our appreciation and support. Iran's role as the current president of the OIC and as an important regional power cannot be side-stepped or ignored. The success of the Tehran summit, in terms of attendance, agenda and approach to today's problems, underlines the importance of that role.

Muslims are sending a strong and clear message to the rest of the world. That message seeks to define a new understanding for Islam as a religion, a culture and a way of life. That message needs to be heard and appreciated by our neighbors and friends. It is a message of proud people who seek to build rather than destroy, share rather than control and communicate rather than oppose.

There is much work to be done. The old language will not disappear overnight. But even in the harsh words of the old guard one can see the reasons for bitterness and distrust: A peace process that has failed to bring about a just and lasting solution, Israel's defiance of international laws and conventions and America's employment of double standards and its disdain for Muslim causes.

On the other hand, the new language by a growing trend led by President Khatami in Iran and others elsewhere, promises to create bridges for cooperation and understanding between Islam and other cultures. These bridges promise to open the path for a better understanding of what each culture has to offer to the other. Many young Muslims need to listen and understand that isolation and confrontation do not bring about peace, stability and progress.

The Muslim world today is trying to overcome the historical, cultural, economic, social and political barriers that separate it from others. But in order for Muslim countries to go beyond the traditional causes of hostility and distrust with the West, the western world must end its bias and change the negative perception we have of it today. In the heart of this cultural friction is the Arab-Israeli conflict, which for 50 years has failed to be resolved honorably and justly.

By Osama El-Sherif

IN THE long and checkered history of Arab-Israeli conflict, diplomatic language plays a pivotal role. Check out the long-standing differences over the interpretation of wordings in Security Council resolution 242's French and English versions. In the French version, Israel is called upon to withdraw from "des territoires occupés" or the occupied territories, while the English version defines it as "territories occupied in the recent conflict."

"The" as a definite article has long been the center of a heated debate between Arab and Israeli negotiators, who more often than not, find themselves absorbed in linguistic duels. The prize is worth it. Without the article "the" in the 22 November 1967 resolution, Israel claims 242 does not call on it to withdraw from all the territories it occupied in the 1967 war, and thus any territorial compromise on its part should meet fully the requirements of that resolution.

The Arabs, including the Palestinians, disagree and insist that Israel should withdraw completely from every inch of land it grabbed by force during the Six-day War. That is, after all, the crux of the "land for peace" formula as accepted by the Arabs.

Semantics is important. But diplomatic language, no matter how complicated or simple, detailed or vague, will always find those with legal and linguistic competence who will punch holes in its intended meanings. In Israel's case, the upper hand goes to those who have the land, and the political and military clout, not those with a just cause.

New Jordanian legislators and political analysts are debating the meaning of the proposition "in," which recently found its way into the Jordanian political lexicon vis-a-vis Jerusalem. In a recent speech to Parliament, King Hussein reiterated Jordan's position of supporting the establishment of "an independent Palestinian state with

its capital in Jerusalem." Observers noted that this statement differed from the classical slogan that the Arabs have been repeating for many years now which called for establishing a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. The latter implies wholeness, totality or entirety while the former does not. Again it is a matter of language.

When some legislators suggested that their reply to the King's speech include the more common statement of "Jerusalem as its capital," deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Nusour objected and insisted that the Lower House use the same wordings adopted by the King. He said these wordings were intentional and responsible and that the King wanted to underline that the capital of the future state of Palestine should be in the city of Jerusalem and not near it or around it; thus the importance of the preposition "in."

Not all people understood it that way. "In Jerusalem" could mean the entire city of Jerusalem, both its eastern and western sectors; it could also mean East Arab Jerusalem or even a house or a block in the occupied city.

But certainly, the Palestinians have a clearer view of where the capital of their future state will be. Or do they? Chairman Arafat likes to refer to his capital as "Al Quds Al Sharif" or the Holy Sanctuary, meaning the holy part of Jerusalem, or in other words the walled part of the city, less than one square kilometer in area, which encompasses Muslim, Christian and Jewish shrines. But the common Palestinian stand refers to Arab East Jerusalem, precisely the part of the city that Israel took from Jordan in 1967. At one point in time some Israelis suggested that Arafat's capital could be located in the nearby villages of Abu Basma or Ras Al-Amoud.

The change in Jordanian language regarding Jerusalem is not confined to omitting articles

and introducing prepositions. Crown Prince Hassan and Prime Minister Abdel Salam Majali each explained, in recent days, what the Jordanian position on Jerusalem is all about. Prince Hassan said this week that "in Jerusalem" means the situation in that city as it was in 1948—before occupation and prior to the war. In Ramallah and after meeting Chairman Arafat last week, Dr. Majali announced that Jerusalem in its entirety, West and East, is subject to negotiations and that final status negotiations will be over the whole of Jerusalem and not its eastern part.

Jordan has always shown genuine interest in the future of Jerusalem, especially the Muslim shrines which it still administers and on which it had an agreement with the former Labor government of Yitzhak Rabin. That "special role" for Jordan is documented in the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty. More importantly, the Jordanian position comes in the wake of renewed Israeli demands that negotiations with the Palestinians move immediately to the final status phase. That phase theoretically includes the status of Jerusalem.

Israel, under the present Likud government, is not ready or willing to put the fate of Jerusalem, or any part of it for that matter, on the negotiation table. Furthermore, it is not clear if Benjamin Netanyahu intends to honor Rabin's commitments to Jordan over its special role in Jerusalem. The Palestinians are certainly not very happy with any Jordanian role in Jerusalem.

As Israel speeds up its plans to Judaize and expand the eastern part of Jerusalem, the Arab response is typically ineffective. Regardless of which part of Jerusalem the Arabs would like to get back, the new reality on the ground plus Israel's refusal to put the Jerusalem issue on the negotiation agenda will make or break the current peace process. The question is this: Can the Arabs accept any final settlement without Jerusalem?

Today no one knows for sure the planned size of Greater Jerusalem, but it is anywhere between 400 to 800 square kilometers, and some estimates predict it will grow to an area of 1300 square kilometers, or one fifth of the total area of the West Bank. The Israeli policy of expanding the Jerusalem area, by annexing and confiscating more Arab land, is coupled by systematic measures to empty East Jerusalem from its Arab inhabitants—a form of ethnic cleansing that is already succeeding in uprooting Palestinians from the once-predominantly Arab old city.

Away from political statements and diplomatic and legal jargon, the real challenge for Palestinian negotiators today is how to deal with the realities that Israel has created on the ground. The physical boundaries separating the two sectors of the city have all but disappeared. Israel's settlement policies have in recent years focused on blurring the old armistice lines and the so-called Green Line. Under the present Likud government Arab East Jerusalem, including the old city, became targets for new settlements such as the one being built in Jabal Abu Ghneim and the proposed housing complex at Ras Al-Amoud.

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## Middle East Beat by Khairi Janbek

### A European outlook

WE HAVE attempted to analyze the US foreign policy while ago and now, we turn our sights to the European perspective of our world. Two themes seem to be recurrent in this scenario: human rights and democracy. It is admitted these remain nebulous in broad terms. European relations with our world is dependent on the rate of building democratic institutions, and our respect for human rights.

At a glimpse, it seems a rather straightforward matter but the fact remains that Europe sees a major problem that of religious extremism and instability in the Arab world. At the beginning, an approach of ignoring the whole phenomenon of extremism was initiated, and business as usual was followed as if the issue did not exist.

However, the dangers of extremism on the political structures of moderate Arab and Islamic countries started being taken seriously by the EU and its members. This led to a new process of finding solutions, regarding the difficulties in maintaining cooperative relations with moderate countries in our world, without allowing the whole issue of extremism and terrorism to affect these relations.

In this context, public opinion in individual EU countries had to be taken into consideration, as much as of public opinion of moderate Arab and Islamic peoples. The slogans of democratization, and respect for human rights had to be weighed against the risks and costs, that may be incurred in the process of political transition within our world. This is especially if the EU is not willing to take upon itself the partial commitment of promoting these values, rather than setting a litmus test for individual countries and their response to those slogans.

The question of socio-economic development is part and parcel of the whole process of political democratization. To build a viable democratic system, requires financing the transitional stage to protect the experience from anti-democratic forces, and religious extremism. And financing this requires support from European institutions, lest the failure to build regional democratic structures, is transformed to Europe, and considered as a European failure.

In this respect, Europe would be gaining more detractors than friends in our world, and the great ethos being promoted, will remain an empty slogan. Nevertheless, countries that are serious about building democratic structures for its future, like Jordan, has embarked on an ongoing dialogue with Europe to develop the channels of communications with European institutions, for the benefit of all.

The belief of our Hashemite leadership, that the specific characteristics of our country and people, must be maintained in the age of globalization and integration into the world economy, has opened up all possibilities for emphasizing the major points in our outlook, and make them comprehensible to an increasingly reluctant Europe. With the directives of HM King Hussein, and the tireless efforts of HRH Crown Prince, Hassan, Jordan has taken the lead in the initiatives of dialogue at all levels with Europe, covering a whole range of issues, and presenting Jordan's case in every stage. Jordan's moderate outlook to the world, must not fall into misconceptions, and the Hashemite ethos of non-violence rather than confrontation, stems Jordan's strength, as well as confidence in surrounding potential difficulties.

Dialogue between us and Europe is the most effective foundation stone, for a proper future relationship that can be built on the content of human considerations, mutual respect, and shared values.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

## Scandal involving ex-agent adds to Mossad's woes

By Rebecca Trounson

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—Yehuda Gil used to teach young agents of Israel's Mossad intelligence service about the craft of lying.

Now, revelations that Gil, a former Mossad spy-master, fabricated information about Syria over a period of years have rocked the intelligence agency. And they have raised questions about the potential danger of the false information and its effect on the agency's future.

The scandal, parts of which began to leak through censored newspaper reports last week, is only the latest trouble for the Mossad, which is already under investigation for a failed attempt in September to assassinate a Hamas leader in Amman.

The new allegations revolve around Gil, 63, and his role as a veteran Mossad officer responsible for monitoring Syria. According to accounts in the Israeli media and various official assessments, Gil for as much as 20 years faked reports that were purported to have come from a mole in

the Syrian military.

The reports suggested that Syrian President Hafez Assad was not fully committed to peace with Israel.

Government officials have downplayed the significance of the faked accounts, saying Gil's disinformation was balanced by other assessments and did not ultimately influence critical actions or policy.

However, in August 1996, tensions grew here over Syrian troop movements in Lebanon near the Israeli border. The Mossad officer's accounts, supposedly from his source in Syria, helped give credence to the idea that Syria was preparing to mount an offensive on the Israeli-held Golan Heights.

Israel's military intelligence service disagreed, and American intermediaries also dismissed the account, saying they believed the Syrian troop movements near the Golan were defensive in nature. Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai resisted calls to mobilize the nation's reserve units, and the tensions dissipated.

## Islamic Summit symbolizes Iranian comeback in Region

By John Daniszewski

TEHRAN, Iran—Iran rolls out the carpet—a \$1 million Persian, naturally—Monday to welcome leaders of more than 50 Islamic nations to a summit that epitomizes both Tehran's expanding role on the world stage and the failure of US efforts to isolate the country.

This week's Eighth Islamic Summit, the biggest international gathering ever held in Iran, shows just how far this country, ruled by revolutionary turbaned clerics, has come in repairing links with many US friends in the region. Princes and emirs, sheikhs and sultans, ministers and rulers are rubbing elbows at the meeting that began Tuesday, including senior officials of Egypt, Jordan and every other Arab country considered a member of the region's pro-American bloc.

About 30 heads of state and thousands of lesser officials are arriving for a three-day meeting that will be the international coming-out party for Iran's new president, Mohammad Khatami, who has said the conference demonstrates "the power and stability of Iran."

One foreign diplomat said: "Now the Iranians can say to the Americans and to the West: 'Here we are. You wanted us isolated. We are not isolated.' In May, Khatami, a moderate cleric, rolled to a stunning 2-1 election victory over his conservative opponent. Khatami's conciliatory moves to neighbors in the region since then have greased the way for a successful turnout. Iran's Arab neighbors have historically distrusted non-Arab Iran, and when the fiery Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini threatened to export his 1979 popular revolution, Arab Gulf rulers understood that their heads were meant to be the first to roll.

From Lebanon to Egypt to Algeria, Iran has been accused of fomenting and financing Islamic unrest against conservative regimes for nearly two decades. Only last year, Saudi officials privately identified Iran as the chief suspect in a truck bombing that killed 19 US military personnel in Dhahran. But recently Iran has been trying to show a more benign face to its immediate neighbors even while it still regularly blasts the United States as "the Great Arrogance" and remains firmly opposed to accepting Israel's place in the Middle East.

Arab leaders at the meeting want to see if Khatami has the clout to carry out his moderate promises in the face of resistance from Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and a parliament dominated by the conservative candidate whom Khatami vanquished, Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri.

As president, Khatami ranks only second or third in the country's hierarchy of leaders, but his 20 million voters are a powerful potential engine for change. The confer-



An Iranian lady passes by a mural depicting the threat to Islam

ence takes place at a time of considerable ferment in Iran. The passions just beneath the surface flared last month when thousands of young Iranians danced exuberantly in the streets, openly defying religious strictures, to celebrate Iran's surprise success at securing a berth to soccer's 1998 World Cup. A week earlier, one of the country's senior sages had allowed his followers to circulate his doubts about Khatami's qualifications and style of leadership, setting off rioting in the seminary city of Qom.

One major question at this week's conference is whether Iran will tone down its harsh anti-American and anti-Israel rhetoric and accommodate moderate Arab countries in order to achieve Islamic unity on a host of resolutions facing the participants. "I certainly hope so," said one Saudi delegate who asked not to be identified. "I hope that Iranians will take this chance to modify their understanding of the world and live as part of it."

The United States and Israel have long accused Iran of sponsoring terrorism and of actively pursuing nuclear arms, long-range missiles and other weapons of mass destruction. Since 1995, Iran has been under a US trade embargo, but the Clinton administration has singularly failed to win support from its European partners to join the United States in imposing sanctions.

The summit's expected heavy turnout stands in embarrassing contrast to Washington's inability to drum up attendance by Arab leaders at a US-sponsored Middle East economic conference—also attended by Israel—in Qatar last month. That summit foundered over Arab anger at the break-

down in the Middle East peace process under Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and resentment at the perceived unwillingness of the United States to do much about it. Officials and delegates here have strived to play down comparisons between the two meetings and are denying that participation is meant as a snub to the United States. "This conference has not been convened to send a message to anyone. It was convened to bring about closer ties among Islamic countries," said Mohammed Javad Zarif, Iran's deputy foreign minister.

But while Khatami and his appointees stress a soothing message, there has been a triumphant tone ahead of the meeting in conservative newspapers, and billboards erected at several key intersections near the conference hall display the stern faces of Khomeini and Khatami and declare in English, "Islam humiliates and downgrades the superpowers." Iran has spent a reported \$80 million to host the event. The conference center, an enormous stainless-steel domed structure, was erected in a mind-boggling five months by a feverish anvil of 8,000 workers. Over the weekend, laborers were still finishing up the landscaping and had unrolled a 1-ton, cream-colored Persian carpet in the entrance hall that is the size of half a football field. The Organization of the Islamic Conference organizes a summit every three years, making this year's Tehran meeting only the eighth since 1969.

## The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

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مركز من الأصل



Middle East Beat  
by Khairi Janbek  
A European outlook

Business scene

The "returned Cheques" phenomenon is again being given much concern. The Finance Ministry is to impose tough measures on accepting cheques made to government agencies and departments. This is because the number of hot cheques continues to rise. Finance Minister Sulaiman Halaz called on cashiers and money collectors in all ministries not to accept any cheques before making sure that the payee has enough money in the bank. On another level, government agencies may no longer take out loans from banks, unless it has prior permission from the Finance Ministry. The aim of such a measure is to reduce the level of public sector indebtedness on the banking system.

The EU delegation which concluded a visit to Jordan last week, disclosed a plan to establish a Business Service Center by early next year. The center is a joint-Jordanian-European venture that provides businessmen and investors with available investment opportunities in Jordan and the EU. Also it promises to give assistance for Jordanian manufacturers to solve problems facing their exports to Europe. The EU enters in such a project as a continuation of its financial and technical aid program to the Kingdom which comes in line with the EU-Jordanian association agreement concluded last month in Brussels.

The economic committee of the Ministry of Planning, in its last Saturday meeting, outlined the development plan for the years from 1998 to 2002.

Among sectors involved in the plan are those linked to direct production areas such as industry, agriculture and tourism, besides social services such as health, education and the infrastructure. Referring to figures on positive economic achievements in the Kingdom, Planning Minister Dr Rima Khalaf said that exports rose from JD 40 million in 1975 to reach JD 1040 million in 1996. National Savings also recorded a noticeable growth at the same time. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to the Gross National Product (GNP) went up from 77 percent in 1976 to 94 percent in 1996.

Foreign Exchange  
Wednesday, 10 December

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US \$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SEK	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEM	0.3667	0.3685
LIT (100)	0.0419	0.0421

Touristic transport companies find a way to offset losses

AMMAN (Star)—It's not only the public transport sector that is going private. Transport concerns run by private operators are also trying to live up to the challenge. They are adopting ways and means to economically improve their lot.

In this respect three companies have come together to streamline their services to be able to reap the fruits of an ever tighter tourism market in Jordan. Despite reasonably good figures for 1997, many tour operators said they have been feeling the pinch since the beginning of the year.

Nowhere has this been more felt than in touristic transport. However, private operators have been putting on a brave face.

Three main touristic transport companies, JETT, ALFA, PETRA adopted a strategy, two months ago, to reorganize bookings. Officials in these companies sat down and drew up a strategy that sought to unify their booking system.

Through this joint coalition, we aim to improve our services, in terms of quality, timing and fixed prices," says Mohammed Al Bilheisi, chairman of the Petra Co. But such a step is aimed at eliminating

the cut-throat competition that is going on in the touristic industry, and increasing because of the flagging number of tourists to the Kingdom.

The three private companies are worth about JD 40 million, and provide services to the public through 272 top vehicles. But the number of the vehicles that are on the road are part of the problem. The local market only requires between 120 to 140 vehicles annually. Demand reaches a peak during the tourism season and during the Hajj (pilgrimage) and Omrah seasons. The active season is from December till March. During this period, 251 vehicles are required to meet the high demand.

Part of the responsibility lies on the touristic transport operators themselves who already have too many buses around. However, some officials argue that this is not part of the problem at all, but is to do with the overall infrastructure of tourism in this country.

Earlier, officials in the three operating companies complained about big losses because of the small size of the market that can't absorb such a large number of vehicles especially in the absence of co-

ordination.

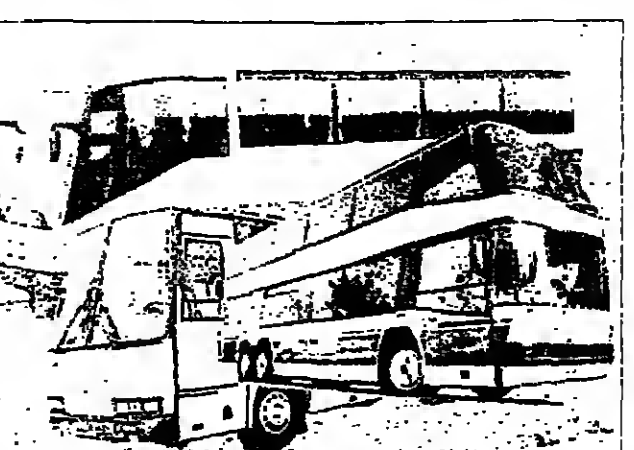
Operating losses for the first half of this year are estimated at JD 1.8 million.

However the latest measure to establish a unified bureau for co-ordination, is expected to reflect positively on the financial status of the three companies. However some touristic agents are still keeping their chin up and argue that these companies provide the country with hard currency, because they organize touristic groups arriving at the Kingdom.

Al Bilheisi is less than sanguine. He says that if the financial status of the sector remains the same and losses continue, then the infrastructure of the tourism industry will be badly affected.

Furthermore, such a problem will be also reflected on the profitability of shareholders. Al Bilheisi called on officials to give touristic transport operators permanent licenses to carry passengers in order to guarantee nonstop operation of vehicles especially when the touristic season goes in a slumber.

Also, Al Bilheisi points out to the impact of the political developments that expose the touristic transport to fluctuations.



The stalemate in the peace process has cast its shadow on the volume of tourists coming to Jordan from Israel.

The average annual revenues of the three transport companies amount to JD 6 to JD 7 million, while their debts are as much as JD 13 million, according to their announced results in the first half of this year.

Such figures need much concern from officials to reorganize the touristic transport sector which provides our treasury with a high revenues that are of crucial importance to the national economy. ■

Pledges for UNRWA '98

JUST OVER \$126 million in pledges for the regular programs and other work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in 1998 were announced at the annual Pledging Conference for UNRWA, held last week in New York.

The pledges will go towards the \$343 million which UNRWA requires for its General Fund budget for 1998, the cash component of which is about \$314 million. UNRWA, which is supported almost entirely by voluntary contributions, provides education, health, relief and social services for nearly 3.5 million registered Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West bank and Gaza.

The largest pledges were from the United States, (\$70 million), Sweden, (about \$19 million), and Norway, (\$14.2 million). This is followed by the Netherlands and Switzerland (about \$5.5 million), Germany (about \$5 million).

Spain (\$3.35 million, of which \$700,000 was specified as an additional contribution to UNRWA for 1997), and the rest as a pledge for 1998: Kuwait (\$1.5 million), Belgium (about \$0.9 million). Other countries pledging on were Austria, Turkey, Luxembourg, China, Indonesia, Portugal, Malaysia, Czech Republic, Tunisia, Cyprus, Egypt, India, Chile and Malta. Several of the Agency's usual major donors said they were unable to make pledges at this time due to incomplete governmental or parliamentary procedures in their countries, these included Canada, Denmark, France, Japan and the United Kingdom. ■

On the road to readjustment

IN ORDER to meet the instructions of the Ministry of Trade's Insurance Comptroller for operating insurance companies, the board of directors of the Jordan-Gulf Insurance Company is studying means of readjusting its financial status. According to the latest amendments of the Insurance Law, insurance companies must raise up their capital to at least JD 2 million. They are given a grace period till the end of March to either reorganize their status or to close down.

The final date was to be last October, however, the insurance sector was given another six months to readjust their finances.

Among possible readjustment options is

the capitalization of the general reserve, offering shares for public or private subscription or merger with other insurance companies.

However, according to Mr Wahib Al-Shaer, chairman of the Jordan-Gulf Insurance Co., and its general manager, "capitalization and subscription are the easiest and the quickest to readjust companies' fiscal status." He said that the merger needs more time and takes more complex measures.

However, he added that the final decision concerning his company was not taken yet. Jordan-Gulf Insurance Co. was established in 1981 at a capital of JD 1.125 million. ■

SBC and UBS merger would create world's second largest bank

By Jane Martinson

SWISS BANK Corporation and Union Bank of Switzerland are expected to announce a full merger in a deal which will create the

world's second largest bank. The new company, likely to be called United Bank of Switzerland, is set to become the world's largest fund manager and private banking operation with assets under management

of SF\$1,300 billion. The new group will be valued at SF\$8.5 billion. Considerable overlap in the domestic Swiss banking operations and European investment banking businesses of the two

groups are expected to lead to significant job cuts. These are estimated at between 3,000 and 7,000 in the combined investment banking divisions which employ between 18,000 to 20,000 people worldwide. London is expected to be hit hardest by job cuts.

The job cuts in the Swiss retail banking arm estimated at between 4,000 and 5,000 are likely to be phased in to satisfy domestic sensitivities. The combined group will employ some 55,000 people worldwide before the job cuts.

UBS is the biggest Swiss bank in terms of domestic retail banking with 2.6 million customers, compared with Credit Suisse's 2.4 million and Swiss Bank Corporation's 2.2 million.

The big banks already face strong competition from the 24 cantonal banks and new legislation means that the Swiss postal savings bank is going to become a powerful competitor. Nevertheless, UBS has never hid its determination to remain a strong player in the domestic Swiss market. Swiss Bank Corporation, by contrast, has always been regarded as the least committed of the big three to Swiss retail banking and has the least to lose by throwing in its lot in this area with UBS.

The other area where UBS is the Swiss market leader and towers over Swiss Bank Corporation is in private banking. The only area where UBS really lags behind SBC is in merchant banking where SBC Warburg earned SF\$991 million in the first half compared with the SF\$574m earned by UBS in its institutional and corporate finance business.

The deal follows a spate of mergers among financial service providers. Travelers Group launched a \$9 billion takeover of Salomon Brothers, the US investment bank, earlier this year while Merrill Lynch offered \$3.1 billion for Mercury Asset Management, the UK fund management group, last month.

One company insider said that UBS had decided to restructure its investment banking division after the \$36 billion merger between Credit Suisse and Winterthur in August.

Several key appointments are understood to favour SBC board directors, Marcel Ospel, SBC's chief executive, is

expected to become chief executive of the combined group while Mathis Cabañavetta, the UBS president, is to be appointed group chairman.

Johannes de Cler, the head of SBC's investment banking division, is to take control of the group's combined investment banking operations.

Gary Brinson, who joined SBC when the group took over his Chicago-based asset management company two years ago, is to take charge of the asset management operations, which include PDMF, one of the UK's largest pension fund managers.

Rudi Bogni, the head of SBC private banking, is to head the combined groups' private banking operations.

It is unclear what positions Georges Blum, SBC chairman, and Robert Studer, UBS chairman, will take.

The extent of the overlap, particularly in equities and corporate finance, has prompted speculation that part of UBS's business will be sold.

The two groups currently compete head to head in a wide range of areas, but particularly corporate advisory, secondary equities and fixed income. One rival investment banker said: "These are very, very similar investment banks and regard themselves as great competitors."

Potential buyers could include Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, which recently failed to win the whole of NatWest Markets.

Other European commercial banks, such as Barclays and National Westminster, have recently decided to withdraw from investment banking altogether.

The deal, which has to be put to shareholders in February or March, will form a new company through a straight share swap with UBS shareholders offered about 60 percent of the new company.

Any deal between the two would have to win clearance from the Swiss and European competition authorities.

Some investment bankers said that the combined group still lacked a significant presence in the US. SBC bought Dillon Read, a US investment bank, earlier this year while UBS has focused on individual teams in the US. ■

Business Chronicle

Perking up!

THE PERFORMANCE of the Amman Financial Market (AFM), since the beginning of the year, has taken a positive trend compared with former years.

During the first quarter of '97 and for the first time since 1993, the market's official index has recorded its ever highest level to close at 174 points, led by a huge rise in the price of the share of the Arab Bank.

Since then, however, the indicator continued to fluctuate, but it seems to be stabilizing at 172 points as the end of the year approaches. This is an indication of a better and promising performance compared with the year-end closing at 153.5 points, and 159.2 points in 1996 and 1995 respectively.

Analysts attribute such a great hype to both internal and external factors.

They say that this year's sharp hike compared with the market's turnover in 1993 and hereafter, is a result of the latest measures approved by the government to remove restrictions on foreign ownership in economic sectors in the Kingdom.

Foreign investors are now allowed to own as much as 100 percent in various economic sectors (excluding trade, contracting and mining). This is of course backed by the willingness of many Arab investors, mainly from the Gulf to buy shares of Jordanian financial institutions in general and in the Arab Bank in particular.

The banking sector has witnessed active trading at the AFM driven by its preparations to increase the paid up capital to JD 21 million before the year end. Some banks have already started measures to offer capitalization subscription in their shares to meet the instructions of the Central Bank of Jordan.

Also 1997 saw other substantial developments in readjusting share dealings on the local market. The Lower House has approved a package of economic laws that greatly helped in activating share trading. These include the companies and securities laws.

Lately, a securities committee has been formed to separate the supervisory role of the market from the executive role. In addition, such a committee is in charge of introducing measures to guarantee greater security for investors and protect them from fraudulent actions.

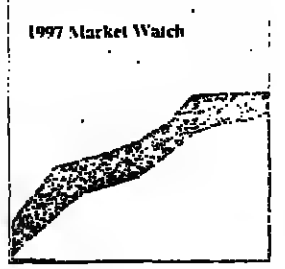
This measure promises for a prosperous phase for stock dealers and mark a turning point in the history of the AFM. Also it ends, it is hoped, a four-year mood of economic sluggishness and restores investors' confidence in the market.

Added are the signs of an admirable economic achievements in the government's economic adjustment program.

Such a strategy as seen by observers, has enabled the Kingdom to adopt successful monetary and fiscal policies aimed at sustaining internal and external stability.







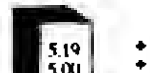

As for external factors that contributed to a certain extent to the activation of share findings, was the implementation of the oil-for-food program concluded last year between Iraq and the United Nations. The benefit that accrued to Jordan from the formula was mainly reaped by Jordanian industrial companies that are given priority to export their products in Iraq. Shares of companies that won contracts to export foodstuffs, detergents, vegetable oils and pharmaceuticals have recorded a noticeable increase at the AFM.

Moreover, the Jordanian house has launched a new era last September to integrate into the worldwide capital market through commercial bonds issued in dollar in favor of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Co. The company has made the ever biggest promotion campaign made by a local company to enlist more than 362 million of its shares. The share of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Co. is expected to reach more than \$9.50 (about JD 6,750) JD71. Financial analyst, Ziyad Al-Busha expects the local market's turnover to double in the near future encouraged by the listing of the Jordan Telecommunication Co., and the National Electricity Co. This is in addition to the positive impact of privatizing some sectors such as mining, water, communications and transport. ■



MARKET WATCH 6-9 Dec.

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
 % ▲ Al Araf Investment ▲ Al Tameer Industry ▲ Arab Chemical Industry	 % ◆ National Cable ◆ Investment Bank ◆ Al Araf Investment	 % + East Project + Cooperative Bank + Al Araf Investment	 % ◆ Almadia Insurance ◆ Middle East Bank ◆ United Finance
5.36 4.55 4.29	5.13 5.02 5.00	5.04 5.06 5.22	5.07 3.71 2.94
 % ▼ National Salary House ▼ Arab Soc. Insurance ▼ Middle East Bank	 % + Jordan Islamic Bank + Arab Paper Industry + Jordan Industry Resources	 % + Al Araf Food Industry + Jordan Islamic Bank + International Trade	 % + Jordan Center + BKKCO + Jordan Marine Bank
5.66 5.00 3.85	5.08 4.88 4.11	5.19 5.00 3.23	5.85 5.88 4.31
General Price Pointer 172.078	171.730	171.330	171.170
Trade Volume 3076908	2632489	3916510	2163545
Stock Volume 352074	824849	1121318	1069669
Highest Traded Stocks			
2703540 + Arab Bank	1334640 + Arab Bank	2573660 + Al Araf Bank	351840

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JORDAN TODAY

TOURISM • CULTURE • ENTERTAINMENT

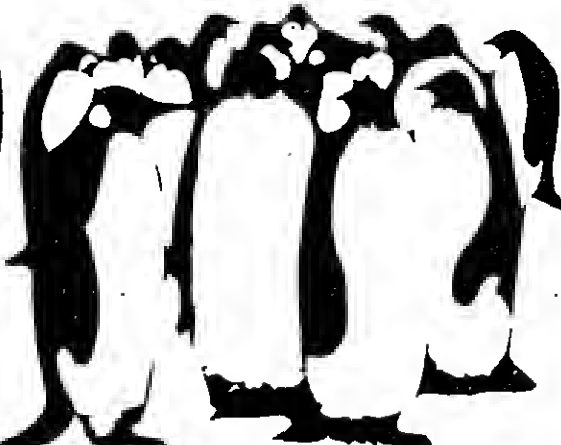
Jordan's Lolly Season

December issue has just come out

For more information call 652-380 or 645-380

Financial Times Syndication



ROUND  
TOWNKing visits Dar  
Al Bir

His Majesty King Hussein honoring officials, nannies and employees who participated in the conversion of Hashemite Palace into Dar Al Bir that now houses the orphans of Jordan. In a special ceremony, King Hussein said that he was grateful to all those who helped to make the project successful. The King added that there is still a great deal that needs to be done and was fully aware of the work that has been carried out by Royal Medical Services, the Jordanian Armed Forces, and the workers at Dar Al Bir.

First composer of Arab  
symphonic music gaining  
international recognition

By Anca de Maio  
Special to The Star

With a thorough classical background acquired from the prestigious Music Academy of Moscow, Agnes Bashir came to the Arab world almost 30 years ago. From the outset, she dazzled the orchestral, operatic and ballet scenes in Baghdad. Her ambition today is to prove, both in Jordan and abroad, that Arab music is not mere folklore.

By marrying an Iraqi musician, Fikri Bashir, in 1967, she rediscovered her "Eastern" (i.e. Georgian) origin in the Orient. Given her irresistible intellectual curiosity for the history and civilization of this part of the world, she came to "feel Eastern culture" and, later on, in the 1980s, she started to create the type of music she fundamentally recognizes today as hers. "It was completely different than the music I had written," she told The Star, in a very slight Russian accent.

Inspired and produced in the Arab world, Agnes's music is a cultivated expression of Arab culture. It is she who, for the first time ever, explored and turned to good use the symphonic potentials of traditional Arab instruments, themes and rhythms. "In spite of several difficulties, I simply felt I had to follow my own way and to approach Arabic music at a different level," she said, sliding a cassette into her player.

The music sounded beautiful, classical and Oriental, at the same time, elaborated and melodious, completely new and still familiar. "This is my Arabic Suite and it was recorded in Germany," she explained, adding that it was composed in 1986 in Iraq. Depicting a scenery of the Arab World in a refined symphonic language, the musical incursions proposed by Agnes Bashir starts with a delicate moment evocative of a sunrise in the desert. It proceeds with an exuberant part of orchestrated themes from Syrian, Iraqi and Kurdish folkloric that is inspired by the background of the *mezzein* calls and church bells, as it were. After a wonderful "moonlight lullaby," it eventually ends in the rhythmic apotheosis of a "feast".

In Bashir's music there is no such thing as an

artificial experiment. Addressing the large public and not specialized, she characterizes her compositions as "Romantic". "My approach of Arabic folklore is cautious in the sense that I want my music to be clear and to be really understood by everybody," she underlined. As the language of emotions is the easiest to decode, Agnes Bashir's lyrics undoubtedly appeals to the Arab public's sensitivity at large.

The opera-like song cycle inspired by Jabbar ibn al-Baytar's poems and composed in Jordan in 1994 is one of the best examples of Bashir's success to the public. Reviving the 19th century European style of intimate music, her "romances" are sung in Arabic. "In order to avoid distorting the pronunciation and accent of Arabic words, I employed a very free rhythm to match that of the blank verse," she explained. Performed by Tania Tamari Nasir in 1995 at the Jerash Festival and this year in Paris, the cycle will be soon presented in Lebanon, Syria and Egypt.

Obviously more difficult to perform than piano and voice pieces, is Agnes Bashir's symphonic works, such as "Sindbad" ballet (1982, a story from "1001 Nights"), "Arabic Suite" (1986), "Ishtar" ballet (on a Sumerian myth), "In Jordan" (1992, inspired by Jordanian folklore), "Revival" (1994), and many others which are, unfortunately, much less familiar to the Arab public. It is a pity that such a unique expression of the Arab music has remained unknown both to the Arab world and to the West for such a long time. Each of the above-mentioned compositions has been performed just once either in the '80s in Iraq or in the '90s at the Jerash Festivals.

"Sometimes it is difficult to bring together all the instruments needed for the interpretation of a symphonic piece, not to mention the special requirements of an opera or a ballet," she said. "Staging 'Sindbad Ballet' at the National Theatre of Baghdad in 1982 was an incredible experience but also the result of a one-year work," she added with a smile. A co-founder of the Music and Ballet School of Baghdad (1968-1970), Agnes was one of the most dynamic organizers of special concerts and events in Iraq.

A piano and composition teacher at the National Music Conservatory since 1992, Agnes Bashir loves to initiate and encourage the young in the mysteries of music. Very proud of her students, she believes in the incredible talent of

wonderchild Karim Said (aged 8) as well as in the extremely high potentials of Wassem Selfid (16), Diana Basrah (15), Zaid Dirani (16), and many others. As a concert pianist since 1967, she performed some of her compositions within the framework of the Jerash Festival.

"I am a music teacher, but this is not all I do," she underlined. First and foremost, Agnes Bashir is a composer. Years ago she was awarded the First Prize for Composition by the Ministry of Culture and Information in Baghdad. Recently she has entered the international scene of composers, as a representative of Jordan and the Middle East.

On the basis of the composition, work finally revealed within the framework of several specialized international conferences and festivals. She has become a member of the National Association of Composers of the United States of America (NACUSA), a member of the International Alliance of Women in Music (IAWM) and of the Lebanese Composers' Society, as well as an honorary member of the Fuji International Festival in Italy.

Invited to an international conference on Women in Music in Los Angeles this year, I realized that the Middle East was simply nonexistent on the musical map of the world," she said. In a speech delivered on the occasion of the "Donia in Musica" International Festival, she depicted the role of women in developing musical culture in the Middle East, from ancient and medieval times to the present day, in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. The international audience welcomed with standing ovations her original presentation as well as her piano Fantasia as the musical background of a film dedicated to all Iraqi sculptor revealing the horrors of war.

From now on, many of her works ("Miniatures for strings", "Three preludes for flute and piano", "Pieces from the Sindbad ballet" and "Reflections for cello solo") will be interpreted

in Italy, Denmark, Germany and South Korea by famous French, Russian, American, Danish and German musicians. Among her composition projects, she mentioned an opera for children and several pieces for a limited number of instruments. She will also prepare many of her manuscripts for publication. "I will just work on," she concluded.

In collaboration with the National Music Conservatory an exclusively Agnes Bashir concert will be organized in March.

Enamored from her deep appreciation of Arab culture, Agnes Bashir's work seems to correspond to a new development stage of Arab music. Thanks to her name, the cultivated facet of the musical culture in Jordan and the Middle East has entered the international stage and is now gaining recognition. ■



## Arab arts crusade on the move

By Kofi Attah  
Special to The Star

Year after year, contemporary Arab artists, in diverse ways, strive to help today's visual expression take its deserved place in the art world. Their works loaded with new concepts are aimed at satisfying not only the Arab public but the world at large. These concepts refocus on the creation of awareness in the Arab world, developing effective cultural and creative dialogue among the people and find new ways to penetrate the international arts scene.

With Nasr Abdul Aziz's exhibition currently going on at Darat Al Funun, the contemporary Arab arts scene seem to be realizing these objectives. Living most of the time in Bahrain, Nasr Abdul Aziz is back in Jordan for a

short stay to open the exhibition of his recent works in the main house of the elegant, and elevated ceiling gallery of Darat Al Funun.

Allegorical and highly symbolic, the 21-piece exhibition of paintings of oil on canvas and acrylic are full of emotional messages recalling the prestigious past of the Arabs, while at the same time dreaming of a new Arab might. His "Authentic Arabic Dagger" an acrylic and oil on canvas painting selling at JD 9,000 symbolizes the glorious past of the Arabs—the dagger represents the mighty Arab-Islamic empire from Saudia Arabia to Turkey and Jordan to Spain through Egypt.

"The Birth of an Arabic Pongy" an oil on canvas that costs JD 6,000 announces the rejuvenation of a new Arab empire. Another painting "Dreams", an acrylic and oil on canvas

is about the subconscious fantasies of the artist defiantly moving on, in confrontation with his past.

Peace and harmony is presented by the "Olive Branch", another oil on canvas that goes for JD 7,200. The approach of his art is evident to the fact that he speaks little with his brush and pays more attention to his public. "The face of a woman from Salt" an acrylic and oil on canvas counting JD 900 is an appreciation of his motherland especially the Jordanian womenfolk, who are mothers of the present generation and that of the future.

"Nasir Abdul Aziz is a great and talented Jordanian artist, whose art goes far and wide," says Mr Adnan Al Sabar, the assistant director at Darat Al Funun. This exhibition is mature and a consistent display by an Arab artist, who despite his

relative success, has not forgotten that as Picasso once said "the greatest victories are rarely achieved at the well established center of your talent, but more often by exploring the border areas."

Using ink, pencil, acrylic paint, oil and canvas Abdul Aziz has irresistibly induced the visitor with one of his message bearing paintings, "The Heritage," the most expensive of all the 21 pieces of his works, that costs JD 11,000. This is a constant reminder that no one can leap forward without looking back to his rich heritage.

Abdul Aziz's exhibition has established him as a distinguished artist that the Arab Arts world needs for its crusade. The exhibition continues till 31 December. ■

Inter-Fit Health Spa  
provides you with a  
glimpse of the future

From left chef Elias Abu Al Hawa, Mr Chawki Ayoub (G.M.) Mr Akel Biliagi, Ms. Rhonda Al Jamal (Recreation Manager)

AMMAN (Star)—Under the patronage of the Minister of Tourism, Mr Akel Biliagi, Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan held the grand opening of its Inter-Fit Health Spa. Guests were shown the latest ways of keeping fit in Jordan. Local and international guests of Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan have been avidly awaiting the arrival of this exclusive Health Spa for members and hotel guests.

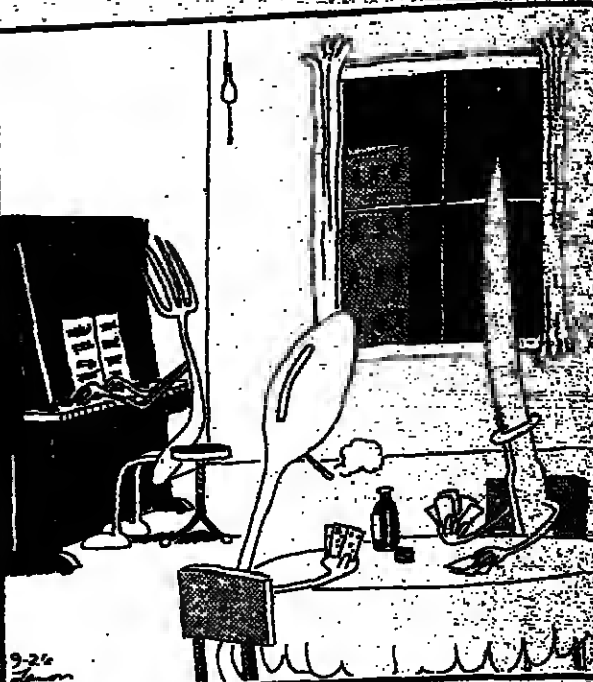
Guests of the Inter-Fit Health Spa can enjoy this unique fitness experience. It offers the latest state-of-the-art equipment, the finest in beauty treatments from facials to underwater treatment for members and none members (by appointment). The Inter-Fit Grape Vine Bar serves a wide range of tempting dishes without the guilt.

A cocktail reception was attended by hotel guests and members of the diplomatic corps in Jordan. The opening is just a small glimpse of the many services to come at the Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan. ■

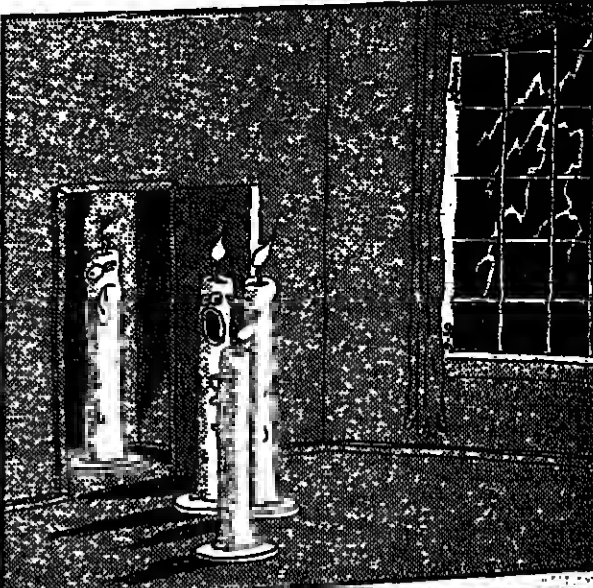


## THE FAR SIDE

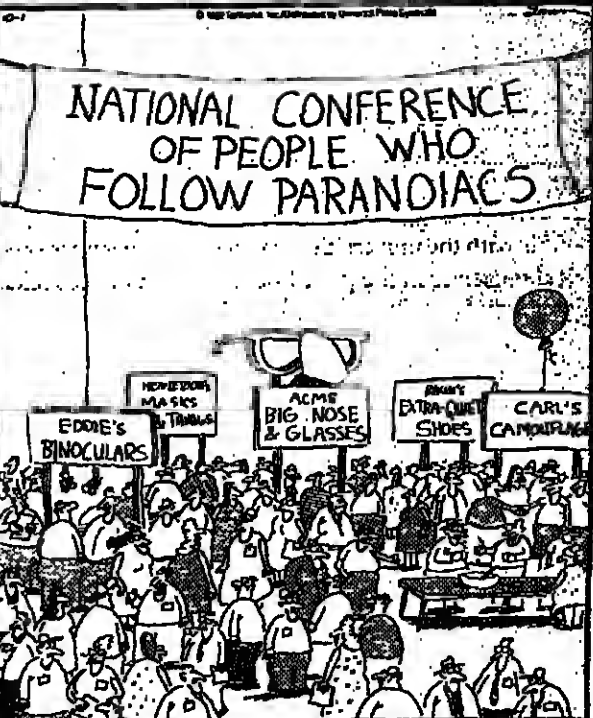
By GARY LARSON



In the early days, living in their squalid apartment, all three shared dreams of success. In the end, however, Bob the Spoon and Ernie the Fork wound up in an old silverware drawer and only Mac went on to fame and fortune.



"AAAAAHHHHH! It's Sidi! Someone snuffed him!"



Boomer and Doug's relationship was never fully accepted by the other bears, who regarded all grubs in a much more traditional way.

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DECEMBER 1997  
A special section offering  
fresh perspectives on  
global issues prepared for  
The Star

# THE WORLD PAPER

PRINTED IN SIX LANGUAGES  
ON FIVE CONTINENTS



APPEARING IN: AMMAN • BANGKOK • BEIJING • BOGOTA • BOMBAY • BOSTON • CAIRO • CARACAS • DHAKA • HONG KONG • JAKARTA • KARACHI • KUALA LUMPUR • LIMA • MANILA • MEXICO CITY • MOSCOW • OTTAWA • PANAMA CITY • QUITO • SAN JOSE • TAIPEI • TOKYO

It used to be just a subject. Now economics is the whole curriculum

## On the eve of the millennium, education narrows its focus

Reading, writing and arithmetic have been the bedrocks of education—especially public education—for the better part of two centuries. But can a curriculum based on this triad prepare a person for life in the 21st century? The people on the receiving end do not think so; students are gravitating towards subjects they think will look good on their resume. If this trend continues, the three Rs will give way to a variety of interesting—and frightening—alternatives

By Mauricio Obregon

IN THE 19TH CENTURY people thought that, with a little luck, education in the three Rs (which, in case you have forgotten, means Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic) could keep them out of the poor house.

Today's universities, however, pay little attention to the three Rs—higher education is mostly about HML (How to Make a Living). Ironically, by following this path the universities may be putting themselves in the poor house.

We already know that most HML-type skills can be taught through the Internet. The basic knowledge and concepts—the "hard" part—have always been studied in books (a television screen is just a "one-page-at-a-time" book), and the teacher's part, which is to elicit and answer questions, can be done on interactive TV. Consequently, HML candidates in the 21st century will not require universities as we know them.

While this may be fine on an individual level, it is expensive for society. Most of today's problems are not due to a lack of well-trained professionals; they are due to people making wrong choices at important crossroads. In the next century there will be plenty of Internet graduates in HML. But there is also going to be a growing shortage of people whose specialty is to ask and answer questions concerning Right and (W)rong (two Rs instead of three).

This is not to underestimate the importance of the HMLs which are fashionable today (Business Administration, Systems Engineering, Communications, etc.). But the fact is that in this century the pendulum has swung too far in the direction of science and technology, and an effort will have to be made to swing it back towards the humanities, which are concerned with the purpose of living.

Unlike HML, the two Rs cannot be learned through the Internet or interactive TV. The art of weighing values or a talent for creativity (which is an act of love) are either born in the genes, develop through a combination of example and excitement, or

stem from both. In other words, personal contact—first with an encouraging family, and later with a teacher who can evoke the traditions, symbols, and ceremonies which help to make "progress" comprehensible on a human scale.

Moreover, in the 21st century higher education will not be limited to young people. More and more old people will be seeking further education, especially those enjoying retirement. This growing pool of "mature students" will have more spare time and money than most of their younger peers—just what universities need.

Consequently, if universities are to survive the next century, they will have to concentrate on producing and bring-

ing together teachers capable of "infecting" their students, young and old, with a culture based on three central subjects:

► Philosophy, which will deal, as it always has, with the history of mankind's efforts to answer basic questions of knowledge, metaphysics and ethics. In other words with the history of our two Rs.

► Language. This will deal with communication, which in the 21st century will have to be dramatically brief; if you don't believe it, just watch a group of young "computer types" talking while they work. And it will be necessary to communicate with computers as easily as if they were men and women.

► Esthetics. This will deal with

morals, a word derived from the Latin word *mores*, meaning accepted customs. In this case, esthetics will involve the practice, not the theory, of the two Rs. This used to be the specialty of Religion, but it looks as if in the 21st century the 10 commandments may not suffice. To compensate, society will have to rely on a strong sense of what is true and beautiful to attract people to what is good, and on a revulsion from what is ugly and false to get them to reject what is bad—by no means an easy task.

This is not to say that Religion is dead; in fact it is more alive than ever, but not in the sense of the 10 commandments. It is alive in the sense of the Latin word *religere*, which in this case means to tie together what we know through our senses. In other words transcendence, without which life lacks an important dimension. Young people already know it; that is why they are interested in oriental religions, or even in hopeless experiments with drugs.

This alphabet soup, if it makes sense, adds up to one thing: in the 21st century science and technology will be taught by other means, and universities will have to concentrate on an art which both young and old will require, and which can only be taught and learned person to person: wisdom. ☺

MAURICIO OBREGON IS COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR AT LARGE IN THE CARIBBEAN AND A COLUMNIST FOR *El Tiempo*, A BOGOTA-BASED DAILY NEWSPAPER.



A detour on the way to employment: "how to" books may dominate 21st century curriculums

Why pay to give somebody else's child an advantage?

## Learning what to ignore is the key to the next century

By Edward Miller

AMERICAN EDUCATION will look very different in the next century because of two simultaneous trends that are already affecting schools.

The first is the near universal belief education is necessary for personal prosperity. The second important trend is the erosion of political support for a free public education system.

Proponents of the education-equals-income theory point to the large and growing gap in income between the highly educated and those with a high school diploma or less. Whether education really makes people more productive at work is beside the point. All that matters is that people believe, as they increasingly do, that schooling makes them more employ-

able. Those who go to the "better" schools get the higher paying jobs regardless of their actual ability to do anything useful.

Those students relying on the public schools to get them to this exalted academic level are on crumbling ground. Historically, public schools in America were justified as necessary for democracy: without education, Jefferson and the other founders of the nation argued, people could not be trusted to act as responsible citizens. But with economic advantage now replacing democratic ideals as the reason for education, public schooling makes little sense.

In a market economy there must be

competition, meaning winners and losers. There is no incentive to provide every child with a good education. Parents naturally want their own children to be the winners. Why should they pay for other children's education? As the willingness of the public to put money into public schools evaporates, the inevitable result is that education will, in not too many years, become a subsidiary of the business world, controlled and managed by multinational corporations.

The beginnings of this change are already evident in the growth of for-profit charter schools, companies specializing in preparing students for standardized tests and corporate sponsorship of various aspects of public school operations from curricular materials to athletic teams to the lunchroom.

American businesspeople have long thought that they would be much better at running the education system than the fuzzy-headed academics and social welfare types who are still, for the most part, in charge. In the 21st century, they're finally going to get their chance.

These captains of global industry will soon decide that the old curriculum, founded on the concept of the "three Rs" (reading, (w)riting and (a)rithmetic), clearly has little relation to the emerging needs of 21st-century business. Reading and writing take too much time, and arithmetic is much better done by machines. They will in time be replaced by the "three Ms": Multi-Tasking, Materialistics, and Mind Management.

What these emerging technology-driven corporations need, first of all, is workers who are able to do many things at once. Productivity suffers when employees are undone by information overload or the demands of multimedia, hypertext, the interactive office and the totally connected economy. Thus, Multi-Tasking will become an essential skill that must be learned from early childhood.

Young children, after all, display an unfortunate tendency to concentrate all their attention on just one object or task at a time. The development of television demonstrated that children could be trained to take in—and even to prefer—visual and auditory stimuli simultaneously while carrying on three synchronous telephone conversations; passing grades will be awarded to those who do this without being distracted by the other children all

around them doing these same things in tiny cubicles.

The explosive development—and commercial use—of virtual reality and computer-mediated experience will necessitate a whole new kind of learning, which will be lumped under the name Materialistics. Simply put, people will have to be taught to distinguish between objects and actions in the material world, which operate under the old rules and limitations of physics and biology, and those in the virtual world, which resemble real-world objects and actions but are limited only by the imagination of their human creators.

Since most aspects of daily life will be lived virtually, schools will take students on carefully controlled field trips into the real world.

The growth of Multi-Tasking in the workplace of the future will present another kind of problem. The unmanageable vol-

ume of data will produce a phenomenon known as "mindblow," in which the worker's personality gradually disintegrates as he begins to spend all his or her time in the virtual world.

The solution will be called Mind Management, in which children learn to monitor incoming sensory impressions and to filter out all those that are not immediately useful, in a task-oriented, value-added sense.

Mind Management will also offer 21st educators another benefit—it will be enormously effective in training children not to ask annoying or troubling questions about school. ☺

EDWARD MILLER, FORMER EDITOR OF THE *Harvard Education Letter*, IS AN EDUCATION ANALYST AND CONSULTANT IN CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS.

## How to Make a Living

### Materialism Aptitude Test

Part One: Multiple choice

Q1. Identify this object:



- A 1.
- ☐ a) Virtual dinosaur
  - ☐ b) Hollywood profit center
  - ☐ c) Collection agency
  - ☐ d) none of the above

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Class: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject: \_\_\_\_\_



When it comes to education, the client is frequently wrong

## Egypt and the US arm students against critical thought

By Monica Maatouk

WAS EDUCATED IN Arab and French schools, and for me, the promise of an American education meant many things—it meant escaping a pedagogy in the Arab system, that valued rote memorization above all else (textbooks with titles like *The Student's Weapon* offered model essays that we learned by heart for our exams).

It also meant the privilege of not having to determine the course of your career at the age of 16, as most French students do. It meant, quite

As I sit here musing on education with the new millennium only two (or three?) years away, it seems to me that the system I escaped to is carrying me back to the system I escaped from. If American education once stood for the kind of disinterested pursuit of scholarship that much of the world envied, then, at the end of the 20th century, it would seem to have fallen in step with everyone else.

So what does the 21st century hold, given that most educators seem to be marching in lock-step? The

privilege of a tiny minority—as it is in Egypt—and this elite will continue to dwindle in size.

All over the world, pre-vocational programs are growing at a prodigious rate—in the US, liberal arts schools account for less than 5 percent of the student population. The increased competitiveness of the job market and the tightening of the economy has put into question any intellectual pursuit that does not translate directly into the workplace. Today's student is an aggressive consumer, eager to acquire marketable skills. All too frequently, then, what gets taught is what sells. Students see themselves

not as open-minded seekers of knowledge, but as marketable commodities, walking resumes. They have become their own best product.

While the US is giving up the commitment to liberal arts that made it a role model for the rest of the world, it is cultivating another trend which, if adopted, could further weaken the educational experience of the 21st century global citizen. Alongside—and in some ways running against—the tough-minded and aggressive ideology of success is a growing therapeutic culture that insists on everyone's right to "feel good" about themselves.

In this climate, emphasis on intellectual rigor is seen as a dangerous force that silences the "natural" voice

and intelligence of the student. Here, the goal is building self-esteem rather than intellectual independence. Anything that challenges or unsettles the student's views is a threat to the student's individuality. The result? "Student-centered learning," where teachers abdicate their responsibility as intellectual role-models and thinkers.

On their end, students stagnate and lose all ability to think self-critically, to evaluate the quality of their own work and ideas. To make things even worse, educators worldwide are faced with an omnipotent media culture that negates those skills we consider the essentials of education—careful, concentrated thought and thorough, nuanced, complex reasoning.

Yet another doomsday fin-de-siècle narrative? Another disgruntled academic with a Cassandra complex? Maybe so. One might say that such discontent is the sign of a healthy questioning of the status quo, but there is agreement across the spectrum: conservatives and liberals agree that we're in bad shape and there is little to cheer about.

Until we can think more rigorously about education's relationship to the market, however, there is little chance that we will have an educated populace. We will need to think a lot harder about the implications of raising children and young adults in a

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**On the wrong track?**  
I read Crocker Snow Jr.'s article on trains in Japan ("A cult attacks a culture in Tokyo's subway," *October 1997 WorldPaper*). It is well-written, but contains two factual errors.

First of all, the Shinkansen—the bullet train connecting Tokyo and Kyoto—was completed in 1964, not a decade later. Second, the first car of the Chuo line is not a ladies only car—I rode precisely that car every day to work from Mitaka to Tokyo Station.

Philip Cueninham  
Asia Center  
Harvard University

## To the Editor-in-Chief

While reading your article on Japanese trains, I noticed a few factual errors:

▶ Train travel did not give rise to the bento box lunch. Bentos existed over 1,000 years ago. They've recently

been adapted for mass distribution, including for train travelers, but they in no way owe their origins to trains.

▶ The station master almost never waves trains forward—that's usually left to his underlings. He stays in his office and says "tea."

▶ People pushers do not use bamboo and wooden poles—they use hands with

white gloves (and only in the winter when heavy coats reduce the amount of space for people). I also think you go overboard in ascribing railroads a special place

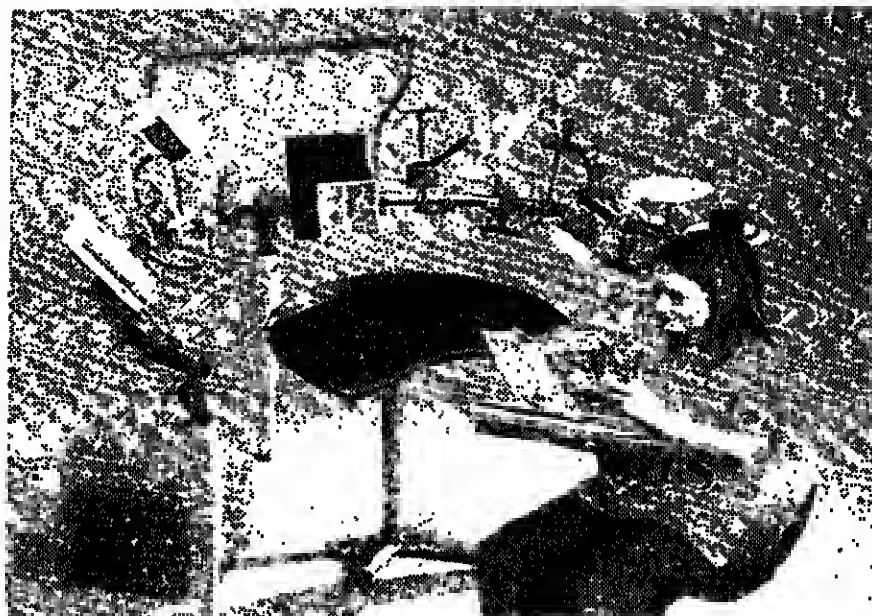
in the Japanese psyche. In fact, one could argue that the privatization of JNR indicates exactly the opposite: the Japanese government had thought that railroads had symbolic importance they would definitely not have privatized JNR (nor would the Japanese public have allowed them to do so if they had thought railroads were more than just people movers).

Kirk Patterson  
Tokyo

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Editor: David  
Managing Editor: Monica Maatouk  
Publisher: David



Student centered learning: the right curriculum for the office of the future?

simply, an education that promised a general training in various disciplines that honed the mind, that encouraged independent, critical thinking, curiosity and wonder at the richness of intellectual activity.

prognosis appears to be bleak. There seems to be little hope that the liberal arts will ever regain the status and prestige they previously had. In the "land of opportunity," for instance, higher education has become the

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# The Star's TV GUIDE

Programs on JTV  
from 13 - 19 December

## ENGLISH PROGRAMS

### SATURDAY

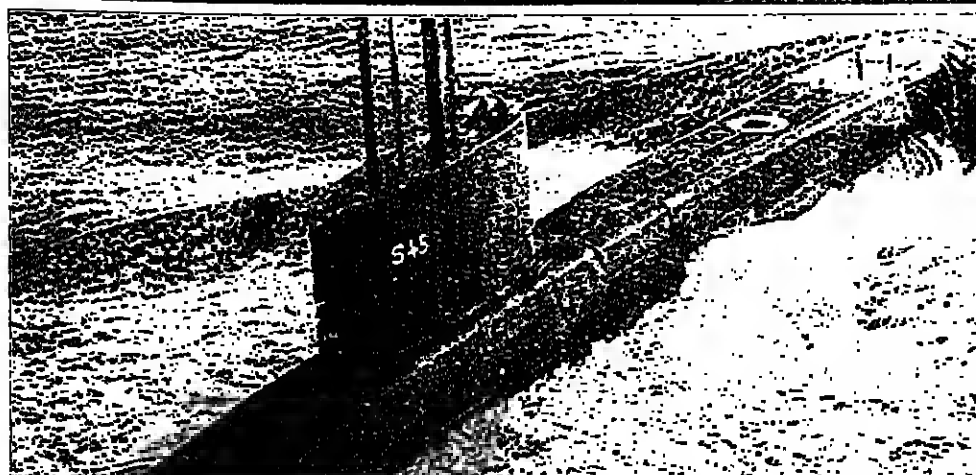
2:00—Holy Koran  
2:30—Muppet Show  
3:00—The Ultimate Stuntman  
4:00—Beakman's World  
4:30—Neighbors  
5:00—French Programs  
7:30—News Headlines  
7:35—Perspective  
8:00—Perfect Strangers  
8:30—Prism  
9:10—Time Trax  
10:00—News at Ten  
10:30—Feature Film: When Stranger Call Back  
12:00—Ellen

### SUNDAY

2:00—Holy Koran  
2:10—The Pink Panther  
2:30—Johnny Quest  
3:00—Energy Express  
4:00—American Chart Show  
4:30—Tarzan  
6:00—French Programs  
7:00—News in French  
7:30—News Headlines  
7:35—Kate and Allie  
8:00—Cinema, Cinema,  
8:30—Submarines  
9:10—Renegade  
10:00—News at Ten  
10:30—North & South  
11:10—The Jewel in the Crown

### MONDAY

2:00—Holy Koran  
2:10—The Show With the Mouse  
2:30—Hammerman  
3:00—Gillette Sports Special  
3:15—Riding High  
3:30—Animal Show  
4:00—Oliver Twist  
4:30—Neighbors  
5:15—French Programs  
7:30—News Headlines  
7:35—Murphy Brown  
8:00—The Health Show  
8:30—Baylton 5  
9:10—Highlander  
10:00—News at Ten



Submarines (Documentary Program), Sunday at 8:30 pm

10:30—Emergency Room  
11:15—Cosmos (Doc.)

### TUESDAY

2:00—Holy Koran  
2:10—Sandocan  
2:30—C.R.O.  
3:00—Skippy  
3:30—The Album Show  
4:30—Square One TV  
5:15—French Programs  
7:00—News in French  
7:30—News Headlines  
7:35—You Bet Your Life  
8:00—Skeleton Coast  
8:30—Encounter  
9:10—Hollywood Remembers  
10:00—News at Ten  
10:30—Magaret Volant  
11:15—Scarlet and Black

### WEDNESDAY

2:00—Holy Koran  
2:10—Johnny Quest  
2:30—Art Box  
3:00—Spell Binder  
4:00—The Munsters Today  
4:10—Border Town  
4:30—Neighbors  
5:00—French Programs  
7:00—News in French

7:30—News Headlines  
7:35—High Tech Culture  
8:00—Some One Like Me  
8:30—Challenges  
9:10—Kung-Fu  
10:00—News at Ten  
10:25—The Sculptures  
11:00—The Ginger

### THURSDAY

2:00—Holy Koran  
2:10—The World of Peter Rabbit  
2:30—My Little Fairy Tale  
3:00—America's Funniest People  
3:30—He Shoot, He Scores  
4:00—National Geographic  
4:30—The Prince and the Pauper  
5:00—French Programs  
7:00—News in French  
7:30—News Headlines  
7:35—Trivial Pursuit  
8:00—Parenthood  
8:30—Lois and Clark (Superman)  
9:10—Oprah Winfrey Show  
10:00—News at Ten  
10:30—Feature Film: Marriage Bed  
12:00—Music Show



## Amman cinemas

- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): Air Force One
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): Conspiracy Theory
- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149): Hercules & The Amazon Women
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149): Liar—Liar
- Plaza (Tel: 699238): Al Maseer (Arabic)
- Concord I (Tel: 677420): Mr Bean
- Concord II (Tel: 677420): Sleep Walkers

5:30—Secrets de famille  
6:00—A la découverte  
7:00—Le journal  
7:15—Magazine  
L'œil de Colomb

### DIMANCHE

5:00—Micro Kids  
5:15—Regarde le monde  
5:30—Secrets de famille  
6:00—Magazine  
Faut pas rêver  
7:00—Le journal  
7:15—Magazine pour tous  
Ziva

### LUNDI

5:00—Bêtes pas Bêtes  
5:15—Regarde le monde  
5:30—Secrets de famille  
6:00—Thalassa  
7:00—Le journal  
7:15—Magazine scientifique  
Cinq sur cinq

### MARDI

5:00—Bêtes pas Bêtes  
5:15—Regarde le monde  
5:30—Secrets de famille  
6:00—Savoir plus santé  
7:00—Le journal  
7:15—Orient sur Seine

### MERCREDI

5:00—Micro kids  
5:15—Regarde le monde  
5:30—Secrets de famille  
6:00—Ushuaia  
7:00—Le journal  
7:15—E = M6

### JEUDI

5:00—Un jour, une fête  
5:30—Le monde est à vous  
7:00—Le journal  
7:15—Le dessous des cartes

### VENREDI

5:30—Le juge Cordier  
7:00—Le journal  
7:15—Magazine  
Allo la terre

## PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

**SAMEDI**  
5:00—Bêtes pas Bêtes  
5:15—Regarde le monde

Programs are subject to change by JTV

## MOVIE GUIDE



## Air Force One

Harrison Ford stars in this thrilling action movie, which stayed at the top of the box office for many weeks. Air Force One tells the story of US President, James Marshall, who's plane gets hijacked and whose loved ones are in danger. The heroism of the President is the highlight of the move, demonstrating a very untraditional role for such a character. The film also stars Glen Close and Gary Oldman.



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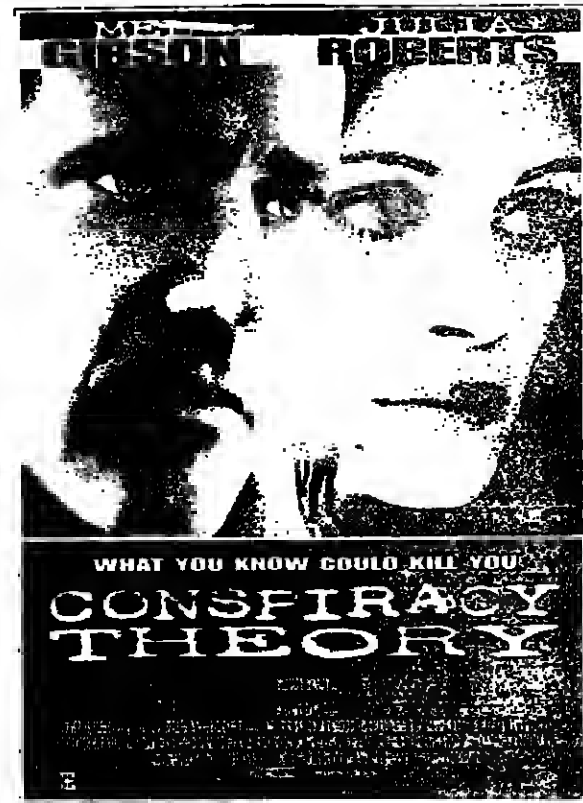
GALLERIA 1 هاتف: ٧٩٣٣٤٣٠ GALLERIA 2

## AIR FORCE ONE

## CONSPIRACY THEORY



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3:30 / 6:30 / 8:30 / 10:30

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# Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Démographie et politique

## Les Palestiniens passent au compte-goutte

Le premier recensement des habitants des territoires depuis 30 ans a été lancé hier. Les Palestiniens comptent en profiter pour affirmer leur souveraineté. Naturellement, ce n'est pas du goût des Israéliens, surtout à Jérusalem-est.

Plus de 6000 jeunes gens des universités ont prêté serment mardi dernier. Opération d'enrôlement ? Non. Tous ces étudiants sont en fait des agents du recensement, mené depuis hier pour la première fois depuis 30 ans en Cisjordanie et à Gaza. Même la partie est de Jérusalem occupée par Israël est couverte par ce décompte historique qui concerne les zones autonomes et celles qui sont toujours sous occupation militaire directe. Les agents du recensement ne se contentent pas de compter les habitants. Ils collectent aussi de précieuses données concernant le niveau d'éducation, l'équipement des ménages et les activités sociales. L'opération, financée par les Nations Unies, la Suisse et la Grande-Bretagne à hauteur de 10 millions de dollars, doit s'achever le 24 décembre. Les premiers résultats seront publiés le 4 janvier.

Tous les résidents des territoires seront recensés à l'exception des militaires et des citoyens israéliens mais sont compris les Palestiniens qui n'ont pas encore obtenu leur

carte d'identité. Cette énorme addition est coordonnée par un haut comité national, dirigé par Yasser Arafat et dans chaque ville, par un comité local. Au-delà d'une opération technique indispensable pour la connaissance de la population, le recensement est, du point de vue des Palestiniens, un moyen d'affirmer leur souveraineté sur l'ensemble des territoires occupés. La question devient d'autant plus délicate à Jérusalem, cet éternel point d'achoppement. Les Israéliens l'ont bien compris et ont réagi vivement à l'organisation d'un décompte palestinien dans une partie d'une ville qu'ils considèrent comme leur capitale.

Le gouvernement israélien a officiellement envoyé une lettre de protestation au ministre palestinien des Affaires civiles, contestant le déroulement du recensement dans Jérusalem. L'Etat hébreu considère ainsi que l'Autorité nationale palestinienne ne devrait y avoir aucune activité jusqu'à ce que le sort de la ville Sainte soit décidé dans les négociations sur le statut final. Le gouvernement de Benjamin Netanyahou a

même menacé d'empêcher par la force puis par une loi les équipes palestiniennes de mener leur travail d'enquête. Les dirigeants palestiniens ont répondu que l'Autorité avait par ailleurs le droit de compter la population palestinienne résidant à Jérusalem et ses alentours. A ce titre, ils ont rappelé le cas des élections législatives de 96, auxquelles les habitants de Jérusalem avaient participé, comme les autres Palestiniens

des territoires occupés. Malgré ces quelques accrochages, les dirigeants palestiniens ont bien l'intention d'aller jusqu'au bout de cette vaste opération dont ils espèrent tirer des conclusions d'ici un an. Actuellement la population palestinienne est estimée à quelque 2,5 millions dont 1,6 million à Jérusalem-est.

Hassan Balawi

## Un recensement attendu

L'organisation d'un recensement a toujours été un objectif primordial pour l'Autorité nationale palestinienne depuis son installation en juillet 94 à Gaza. D'ailleurs, le département du recensement a été l'une des premières institutions créées. Il faut dire que les Palestiniens ont attendu longtemps avant de pouvoir, comme aujourd'hui, organiser leur propre décompte de la population. Une première enquête a été menée dans les années 30 mais sous le mandat britannique. Après le partage de 1947, l'OLP a bien essayé d'organiser un recensement à partir des pays arabes, sans succès. Après 1967, c'est au tour des Israéliens de dénicher les Palestiniens de Cisjordanie et de Gaza mais ce recensement a été largement boycotté et rejeté par les premiers intéressés.

H. B.



Après samedi, puis dimanche bientôt mardi où je serai avec mon amour... Comme le chante cet habitant de Jérusalem, le grand jour du recensement est enfin arrivé après des années d'espérance. Dessin tiré du quotidien Al-Quds.

## Madaba : pompon du chômage

Pendant 25 jours, 95 enquêteurs ont posé plus de 200 questions à 6000 familles jordaniennes sur les conditions de travail et la recherche d'un emploi. Voici les principales conclusions de l'étude :

- Un taux de chômage entre 22 et 27,5% (22% si l'on exclut ceux qui n'ont pas réussi à trouver un travail depuis plus de dix ans, ceux qui n'ont pas accepté un emploi, à l'issue d'un entretien, ceux qui ont refusé une ou plusieurs propositions d'embauche).
- Les femmes sont plus exposées au chômage et elles ne représentent que 15% de la population active.
- Le chômage touche davantage les jeunes : 42% de chômeurs chez les 20-24 ans.
- Sur plus de 3500 personnes embauchées, 83% estiment que le piston (*wastin* en arabe) est un atout majeur pour obtenir un travail.
- 20% seulement de ceux qui ont un emploi ont suivi des études supérieures.
- 41% des chômeurs rêvent d'un travail indépendant mais les procédures pour monter sa propre entreprise sont très compliquées en Jordanie.
- 12% ne sont pas satisfaits de leurs conditions de travail.
- Madaba est la ville la plus touchée par le chômage (36,3%) et Ma'an la plus épargnée (20,2%). A Amman, le taux est en-dessous de la moyenne nationale avec 25%.

## C'est la vie

L'agenda culturel d'Amman

### Exposition

Où l'on redécouvre le parcours artistique d'Ammar Khammash, le designer qui habille les intérieurs privés et publics jordaniens. Jusqu'au 12 décembre au Centre culturel français. Renseignements au 637009 ou 636445.

### Cinéma-Spécial BD

Le secret des Sélénites. Dessin animé, couleur, sous-titré en arabe. Le Baron de Munchausen voyage avec Cyranon de Bergerac. Lundi 15 décembre à 16h00 et 20h30 au CCF.

## Nouvelles du Pays

Chômage

## L'étude qui a failli rester dans les tiroirs

Elle vient enfin d'être publiée par le Centre d'études stratégiques de Jordanie. Une enquête qui situe le taux de chômage entre 7 et 12,5 points au-dessus des chiffres officiels.

Le Centre universitaire a en effet dû attendre plus de neuf mois avant de pouvoir faire connaître les résultats son enquête réalisée en février dernier. Retard accumulé à cause d'un désaccord entre le Centre et le Département des statistiques (DS) sur la légalité de la publication de l'étude. «Le Département des statistiques a menacé qu'il ferait tout pour empêcher de la sortir», affirme un responsable du Centre d'études stratégiques (CES). Le DS justifiait alors son blocage par une loi qui oblige notamment le CES à obtenir son accord avant toute publication.

Après neuf mois d'impasse, les dirigeants du CES ont finalement décidé de passer outre et de dévoiler les résultats de leur travail. «Nous sommes dans un pays démocratique, clame un responsable du Centre, pourquoi cacher une telle enquête scientifique, première du genre et financée par l'ancien gouvernement? C'est en effet grâce aux quelques 40.000 JD du cabinet de l'ancien ministre Kabarti qui le Centre d'études stratégiques a pu se mettre au travail. A cet égard, le ministre actuel du Plan Rima Khalaf, déjà à ce poste sous Kabarti, serait directement intervenu pour que cette étude soit publiée. Information non démentie pas le Département des statistiques.

Le DS, vexé par le succès médiatique du travail du CES, a envoyé une lettre officielle au président de l'Université de Jordanie réclamant des détails sur le déroulement et le contenu de l'enquête. «Nous cherchons d'abord des réponses à nos questions puis nous déciderons si l'enquête est valable ou non», déclare sérieusement un autre responsable du DS.

Au-delà de cette polémique, les Jordaniens se retrouvent avec deux chiffres du chômage sur les bras et se savent pas auquel se vouer.

## La galère de jeunes Jordaniens

Sameera, 24 ans, études en langue arabe : «Depuis quatre ans, je cherche sans cesse un boulot. Résultat : trois conseils que je retiens par cœur : «il faut faire la preuve de ton expérience», «ne soyez pas trop exigeants, vous êtes encore jeunes» et «trouvez un piston, ça aide».

Ahmad Abed Al-Kareem, 24 ans, comptable : «Le plus horrible, c'est de se retrouver en face d'un type je-m'en-foutiste dans un entretien d'un quart d'heure au cours duquel vous êtes considéré comme un incapable. Ils se prétendent suffisamment professionnels pour vous évaluer en dix minutes dans les compétences, les faiblesses ou ceux qui n'ont pas le sens des responsabilités, comme moi...»

Se'ed, ingénieur : «Dans les journaux, peu d'annonces demandent une expérience de moins de deux ans et rares sont celles qui n'en réclament pas. Autrement dit, les annonces sont destinées à des personnes qui ont déjà une situation. Et les nouveaux diplômés alors ? Faut-il qu'ils restent deux ou trois ans à la maison après leur diplôme avant de trouver un emploi ?»

Mansour, mécanicien : «Pour moi, le chômage est une véritable mise en marge de la société».

Propos recueillis par Nahed Al-Khlouf



En France comme en Jordanie, ce sont les jeunes, les principales victimes du chômage.

## 7 millions de chômeurs en France ?

C'est un chiffre tout nouveau que vient de sortir le Commissariat du Plan dans un rapport iconoclaste. Un rapport commandé par le Premier ministre Alain Juppé en 1996. Normalement, le ministère du Travail ne comptait jusqu'ici que 3,1 millions de chômeurs, soit les demandeurs d'emploi à temps plein inscrits à l'ANPE (Agence nationale pour l'emploi).

Mais «ces chiffres laissent de côté tous ceux qui sont fragilisés par le sous-emploi», rappelle Henri Guaino, secrétaire général du Commissariat du Plan. A savoir, 321.000 personnes en formation, 470.000 personnes en préretraite, 947.000 chômeurs tellement découragés qu'ils ne vont plus s'inscrire à l'ANPE, soit au total 7 millions de personnes. Au-delà du chômage, le Commissariat du Plan dresse le tableau de la «précarisation de la société française». Quand le chômage monte, les demandeurs d'emploi acceptent plus facilement des temps partiels, des bas salaires, des contrats précaires. «En fait, note le rapport, la dégradation de la situation de l'emploi se traduit par un effritement général du travail (...). Par vagues successives, c'est toute la structure de la société qui est en train de se modifier vers plus d'insécurité pour toutes les catégories». Pour justifier l'addition de choses disparates, Hervé Guaino souligne qu'il «n'y a pas deux blocs (les salariés et les chômeurs) dressés l'un contre l'autre» mais de nombreuses passerelles : sur deux ans, indique le rapport, 25% des ménages font au moins une fois l'expérience du chômage. Et ce passage temporaire par le chômage se traduit par une baisse de salaire (-1,2% en moyenne), une fois retrouvé un emploi. «Cette question est capitale pour mesurer le caractère pénalisant du chômage sur les conditions de vie et pour bien comprendre la réaction de peur qu'il suscite».

Le Jourdain

Aventure

## Un sourire autour du monde

Engagé depuis sept mois dans un ambitieux périple autour du monde qui marie l'aventure à l'humanitaire, «le rêve utile» d'un Français de 34 ans amoureux de la liberté et des enfants, est en train de devenir réalité. Jacques Sirat vient de traverser en vélo la Jordanie, le 15ème pays de son odyssée.

C'est un choix de vie que Jacques Sirat a fait en 1994, lorsque - après neuf ans passés dans l'administration - il décide de s'évader d'un quotidien ennuyeux et de se lancer dans l'inconnu. Durant 16 mois, il court à travers l'Europe sur plus de 18 mille kilomètres et use 20 paires de chaussures. En Albanie, il a la révélation de la misère dans laquelle vivent beaucoup d'enfants de la planète. «C'est là que le déclic s'est produit», raconte Jacques Sirat, l'envie de pouvoir faire quelque chose pour eux est à l'origine de ce projet de voyage autour du monde, qui va se poursuivre ces quatre prochains mois.

### Retour en 2001

Tous les deux mois, il écrit un petit journal intitulé Le globe-trotteur, qui est vendu en France à 10 FF l'exemplaire. L'argent obtenu est destiné à une petite association française, SOS Enfants Sans Frontières, qui soutient des programmes de vaccination et de scolarisation au Liban, en Thaïlande, au Vietnam, à Haïti et au Cameroun. «Si on vend les 2000 exemplaires de chaque édition, sur trois ans de voyage, cela financerait la scolarisation de 240 enfants», précise-t-il avec un sourire généreux. «Au retour, en 2001, poursuivrai-je toujours, souriant, je vais publier un recueil de photos qui sera vendu dans le même but».

Il appelle son voyage «le tour du monde de l'espoir», parce qu'il amène de l'espoir à quelques enfants délaissés et aussi parce qu'il se nourrit essentiellement d'espérance. Sans aucun capital de départ, Jacques veut prouver que l'innocence du sport et de l'aventure peuvent suffire pour réaliser un projet apparemment impossible. Fort uniquement du soutien d'une compagnie d'assurance et de quelques autres sociétés qui lui ont fourni les vêtements et le vélo, le Français parvient à subsister avec 4 JD par jour, en emportant beaucoup sur



Tous les deux mois, Jacques Sirat écrit un petit journal de ses aventures vendu en France au profit de l'association SOS Enfants Sans Frontières.

l'hospitalité des gens qu'il rencontre. «Loin des grandes cités, dans les villages, la population est infiniment plus chaleureuse», dit-il, en mentionnant l'accueil extraordinaire des Roumains et des Bulgares, ainsi que le naturel avec lequel il a été reçu chez les bédoïns su-riens et jordaniens. «comme s'il était attendu».

### Comme Burckhardt

Bloqué dans le royaume hashémite pendant près d'un mois faute d'obtenir un visa pour l'Irak ou l'Arabie Saoudite, Jacques Sirat ne regrette pas son long séjour. La découverte de Petra avec une émotion qui ressemble à celle ressentie par l'explorateur Burckhardt, les rencontres avec des bédoïns le long de la Route des Rois, l'expérience d'une halte au milieu de Wadi Rum, autant de trésors de vie. Le plus désolant est l'attente, qui lui coûte du temps et de l'argent, ainsi que l'obligation de modifier son itinéraire.

Initialement il avait prévu de passer par l'Irak et l'Iran pour se rendre au Pakistan. Maintenant, avec 13.000 kilomètres dans les molettes (sa charge est de 50 kilos, vélo compris), il essaye d'accéder par le Yémen et Oman, avant de poursuivre sa route à travers le Népal, le Tibet, le Bangladesh, le Cambodge, le Vietnam, le Laos, la Chine, la Corée et le Japon. Ensuite, il devra franchir l'Océan Pacifique (en travaillant sur un bateau s'il ne réussit pas à trouver de sponsors pour le billet d'avion...) et gagner les côtes du Mexique. Après avoir parcouru toute l'Amérique centrale et méridionale, il crociera l'Atlantique et atteindra le Cameroun avec l'intention de remonter la côte ouest-africaine et de revenir en Europe.

Le rythme prévu pour tout le voyage sera de 100 à 150 kilomètres par jour. Il préfère la découverte complète, au gré du hasard et de la chance, à la préparation préalable, soignée d'éviter les clichés des guides

touristiques et les idées préconçues. Il affirme adorer le contact avec des gens de culture différente, avec le sourire comme «passaport». «Si on a vers les gens avec un sourire, on a la garantie de ne pas se faire agresser et de faciliter la rencontre», conclut-il.

Né au sein d'une famille de dentiers, Jacques Sirat a choisi la grande aventure. «Le plus dur était de prendre la décision, le reste me semble beaucoup plus simple». Il est heureux de partager avec des enfants des écoles de France et d'ailleurs, ses découvertes sur les pays et les peuples. Consistent des difficultés inhérentes à l'absence d'un travail salarié et d'une couverture sociale, il ne pense pas encore au retour. Et, surtout, il ne regrette rien : «Au moins j'aurais fait quelque chose dans ma vie...», conclut Jacques avec le sourire des optimistes.

Anca de Maio



# The need to talk sends mixed signals

By Clive Cookson

MOBILE PHONES have been accused of many things. They disturb passengers in trains and diners in restaurants, interrupt plays and operas, cause road accidents by distracting drivers, spoil the view through ugly transmitter masts, and are feared to cook the brains of frequent users through excessive electromagnetic radiation. Now they are threatening the science of radio-astronomy.

Interference from mobile communications is already making it more difficult to detect faint radio signals from outer space, and astronomers say communications satellite networks planned for the next few years could make matters far worse by obliterating the wavelengths that are most important for scientific observation.

The threat is more serious than the similar problem of man-made light pollution for conventional telescopes. In optical terms, it would be like trying to see faint stars through the glare of hundreds of powerful spotlights in orbit.

The demise of radio-astronomy would be a tragedy for science. The field has contributed enormously over the past 50 years to our understanding of the universe and has huge potential to make more discoveries.

Distant galaxies, several stages in the evolution of stars and many molecules in interstellar space can only be detected by their radio emissions, because they do not give off enough radiation in other regions of the spectrum (infra-red, visible, ultra-violet, X-ray and gamma-ray). And radio-astronomy is essential for studying the "cosmic microwave background", the faint relic of the Big Bang that started our universe.

The radio spectrum is divided up between competing users through a series of global and regional agreements under the auspices of the International Telecommunication Union. The most recent of the ITU's biennial World Radio-communications Conferences, WRC-97, has just finished in Geneva.

Unfortunately, radio-astronomy is increasingly being squeezed out of its allocated frequency bands by the insatiable demands of commercial users, particularly mobile telephone companies. Although astronomers make sure they have representatives to fight their corner at meetings such as WRC-97, they are inevitably out-gunned by companies spending billions of pounds on satellite communications services.

Satellite operators say they will stay away from the frequencies that are most important for astron-



omy. The question is how far away.

Astronomers emphasise the strength of man-made transmitters, compared to celestial radio sources: a single mobile telephone transmitting on the moon would be the third most powerful radio source observable in the universe.

As a result, there can be disastrous interference even when, on paper, there is a frequency gap between them.

Two bands allocated to radioastronomy in the 1950s and still vitally important today are 1400-1427 MHz and 1610-1613 MHz. They cover the natural transmission frequencies of neutral hydrogen and the hydroxyl (OH) radical respectively.

The hydroxyl band is particularly threatened by new mobile communication networks, such as the Iridium consortium led by Motorola of the US, which plans to fly 66 satellites in low earth orbit by 1999.

They will beam down signals to mobile phones in the 1621-1626 MHz range, which is discernably close to the 1610-1613 MHz reserved for science. Astronomers fear they will be swamped.

Radioastronomers have escaped the worst effects of earth-based radio services, because transmitters have deliberately been built away from radiotelescopes and vice versa. The search for natural radio sources such as quasars, pulsars and inter-stellar gas clouds is not the only activity threatened by man-made radio pollution. The search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI) is an increasingly respectable scientific pastime that requires clear radio reception to hear any signals from civilisations elsewhere in the universe.

It would be a shame if our eagerness to huddle endlessly among ourselves, as we rush around the earth, were to blot out a message from intelligent life on a distant planet.

Financial Times Syndication

By Samir Raafat  
Star Cairo Correspondent

CAIRO—One of the wildest stories yet to come out of the 17 November Luxor massacre when 58 tourists and four Egyptians lost their lives to six terrorists in the temple of Queen Hatshepsut, was that the carnage was the consummation of Pharaoh's Curse. Hadn't it coincided practically to the day with the discovery of King Tut Ankhamen's burial chamber some 75 years ago? And wasn't it known to everyone in the 1920s that several persons present at the monumental discovery had died under bizarre circumstances?

Indeed, one could call the last few weeks Pharaoh Revival Season. Before the Luxor debacle, plans were well underway to celebrate in November and December of this year, the 75th anniversary of the discovery of Tut Ankhamen's burial chamber. A happening which took place on 16 November, 1922, and kept the entire civilized nations in suspended animation. Across the world, in London, the Times which had obtained exclusive rights in the reporting of the discovery, churned out titillating episodes each day concerning the monumental findings. Since then, the Boy King who reigned over Egypt between 1361 and 1352 BC, has been the source of unravelling mysteries.

Publicity buildup aside, King Tut is today the single most popular trademark for Ancient Egyptian civilization. By the looks of it, the hype is about to spill over into the next millennium. Everywhere, as free economies globalize, expand and contract, King Tut continues to be merchandised any which way one can. From serious books and academic CD-ROM's, to holograms, coffee mugs and T-shirts, King Tut is everywhere and was even the subject of an international dispute in a multi-million dollar case of pirated logo. But long before these tacky displays appeared on the kitsch horizon, the media had already devised ways of keeping the legend of the Boy King alive. The earliest break came in April 1923 when one of the tomb's two discoverers—Lord Carnarvon—died at the Cairo Continental Hotel from mosquito bite complications.

Almost before anyone could shout "Leave King Tut alone" the word had spread to the four corners of the globe that the British peer's demise was the work of Pharaoh's Curse. Henceforth, anyone who had been near King Tut Ankhamen's tomb the day it was discovered, and who happened to die

Pharaoh season in Egypt

# Monumental Unravelings



The gold mask of Tutankhamun

within proximity of November 1922, the unofficial reason of death would invariably be Pharaoh's Curse.

Things got worse when Ali Fahmy, the young son of a large landowning Egyptian family who was present at the tomb's opening, was murdered by his European wife the following year in London's Claridge hotel. "Pharaoh strikes again" screamed the agitated dailies. Soon enough books were supplementing the exhilarating editorials. No one had bothered to verify that Mr.

Fahmy had murdered her previous husband and that the first spouse had never come to Egypt or heard of King Tut!

As though to disprove these tall tales from the crypt, while touring the recent Tut Ankhamen exhibit at the British Council in Cairo, I discovered per chance a photo taken on 17 November, 1923 depicting my great-uncle—Chamsi Pasha—standing at the entrance of King Tut Ankhamen's burial chamber next to Howard Carter and Monsieur Pierre Lecau, the then-

director of the Egyptian Antiquities Department. I can safely vouch that Chamsi lived to be 77 dying in 1962 following a brilliant political career. So much for Pharaoh's curse.

Early last November, as though coinciding with the 75th anniversary of the discovery of King Tut Ankhamen's burial chamber, a French archaeological team headed by Alain Zivie uncovered a most revealing Ancient Egyptian tomb in Sakkara a few kilometers south west of Cairo, not far from Memphis the sometime administrative capital of Ancient Egypt. Digging into rock below a modern day guest house and cafeteria, the French team discovered what appeared to be a first in Ancient Egyptian mummification. A second more thorough examination—and bingo! The underground chamber revealed this was no mere nobleman's place of rest but was the tomb of Maya the divine wet nurse, a beautiful noblewoman whose highborn breasts had been suckled by the Pharaoh God, Tut Ankhamen. Engraved on the adjoining tombs' walls were members of the late 18th Dynasty nobility including priests, grandees, the chief of the royal treasury, ambassadors and three generations from a family of royal painters.

At a 7 December, 1997 press conference held at the Egyptian Ministry of Culture, Zivie explained that this latest discovery was only the beginning. The French Egyptologist expected further consequential revelations to come out of Maya's near intact tomb. For instance, we may finally uncover who was King Tut's biological mother as opposed to his well known Divine Parenthood. Although we know that King Tut was born in Tel Al Amarna and that he was reportedly the son of Amenhotep III (an earlier 18th-dynasty king), to this day no one was able to determine who exactly had given birth to the Boy King.

Another unknown which might soon be cleared concerns the court painters depicted on the nearby murals. Are they the same ones who decorated the other tombs that survived from that turbulent period? Many questions some of which are about to be answered. Alain Zivie, too absorbed by what is in store for him the coming days, could not be bothered with King Tut's Curse.

Seventy five years since the Boy King's burial chamber was discovered and the entire world is still spellbound by the mysteries of his enigmatic short reign.

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## News update

## Microsoft fights monopoly charges, regarding IE

● Microsoft Corp. is defending itself against charges it is 'illegally using its monopoly power, saying the government is trying to prevent it from improving its products'.

Microsoft asked a U.S. District Court judge to dismiss the government's case, saying that a proposed \$1 million-a-day contempt citation "is aimed squarely at preventing Micro-

soft from including improved features and functionality in upgraded versions of Windows 95."

Microsoft says that it had agreed not to tie the purchase of one product to another but retained the right to develop new, integrated products.

## Netscape Communicator is taking off

● Netscape Communications says is pleased to see the suc-

cess of its Communicator software. Netscape announced that the number of Communicator users has exceeded 25 million since the product was first introduced in the middle of 1997.

So, in spite of tough competition from the likes of Microsoft and IBM, Netscape forges ahead in the Internet age.

To date, Netscape believes that more than 68 million people have tried or used its products.

## INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

## Macs running Windows software

IT'S BEEN a while since we discussed the Mac/PC debate on the technologies that are allowing Mac users to enjoy the advantages of the IBM PC and compatibles world.

Setting aside the debate on which platform is better, focusing on the concept that people need functionality on their machines, be it Mac-based or PC (Windows) based functionality, all parties involved realize that the real success of a platform is in its openness.

In other words, it is very important today that companies can all 'talk' to one another. Due to developments like the growth of platform-independent networking environments, Mac users in offices all over the world are finally realizing an 'in-group' again. Still, there is much to be done before a Mac Operating System (OS) can seamlessly deal with another OS. Accordingly, single-system solutions are still necessary. Let's take a look at some PC-emulating solutions for the Macintosh platform.

First, there are software solutions which provide easy emulation, but have a limit in terms of 'emulation' powers. Virtual PC from a company called Connectix is such a product, which intelligently emulates the PC, allowing full-blown Windows 95 applications to run on a Mac. It even comes with a copy of Windows 95, which you treat like any other application. It sits on your Mac OS desktop as an icon, which you click on to launch into Windows mode. Under that mode, you can run Windows applications.

This is a good solution to the problem of the lack of enough Mac applications on the market. If a Windows package can do the job, use it on your Mac with an emulator. Virtual PC is priced at around \$150 in the USA. Also available is SoftWindows 95, from Lusignia, which does pretty much the same, but is priced at around \$200 on the US market.

Moving onto hardware, it adds a full-fledged PC into your Mac's guts! The solution involves inserting an add-on card, equipped with a Pentium processor, priced at just under \$600.

Radius produced these cards, and they have proven quite successful. Apple itself adopted this idea by introducing models of Mac-PCs which switched from the Mac OS to the DOS/Windows platform with a press of a button. This idea didn't fare too well on the market, but it was a technical breakthrough! The whole idea is to make people stick to the Mac platform. We all know that, relatively, Mac users are decreasing while Intel/Windows system users are increasing. So, one way to save many people's favourite platform from sliding into oblivion is by allowing it to run 'everybody's' software.

Apple distributors in Jordan are well-informed on these and other PC-emulation solutions. Contact Ideal Systems on telephone 5930123 or Specialized Technical Services (STS) on 827611 for further assistance. ■

By Jabra Ghneim

Special to The Star

WHILE I was surfing the Net lately, I read in a banking site (which belongs to a well-known regional bank) a piece which informed customers that doing banking transactions over the net isn't secure enough yet.

Thus, the bank couldn't offer those services. What a way to misinform customers! The fact that many people don't know is that some major Arab and international finance and banking institutions are moving a huge bulk of their operations to the Internet. Examples include Visa, Mastercard, and Emirates Bank. Add to all these a host of international financial institutions such as Schwab, and Prudential. These organizations offer a range of services, which includes account inquiry, money transfers, and even purchasing and selling of stocks and other forms of equities.

The latest turmoil in international stock markets showed that people actually use these services, and they use them heavily. During the turmoil

## In spite of concerns, the 'Net' is the perfect place for business: Internet gets down to Business

many financial institutions reported that their web sites suffered a huge overload due to the transactions which took place. An Internet based financial institution, E\*Trade, reported that on Monday and Tuesday 27 and 28 October, their system hosted 8,000 simultaneous users and processed 50,000 trades, and "the system didn't crash".

Similar reports were published by other financial institutions from all over the world. If the web isn't a secure place for electronic commerce then how come international institutions and users from all over the world depend on it so much?

I have to agree that we still have a way to go before the web is perfected to a point where it will be 100% secure.

A recent report by Gary McGraw, a research computer scientist, which was published during the Network security



and Firewalls 97 conference, stated that technologies such as Java weren't as secure as mar-

keting evangelists claimed. It is true that the Java Virtual Machine (JVM) in which Java applets run uses such strategies as code verification and restrictions on the use of the OS's application Programming Interface (API) to limit the ability of an applet to misbehave.

But, Java's security features are not perfect according to McGraw. Hackers can still find ways to produce malicious applets using Java. Still, the Net gives financial institutions everywhere an opportunity to offer virtual services to investors everywhere. The web can provide investors with a strong way to voice their disapproval of government policy and misbehavior. This is done by enabling investors to shift their money out of any economy which doesn't conform to economic basics.

Economists call this "Hot Money". Again, part of what caused the current turmoil in Asia, Europe, and America was the fact that investors all over the world knew within seconds what the market trend was. Then they were able to conduct their trading through the web as if they were personally in those markets.

I believe that deregulation (total deregulation) of telecommunications, the explosive growth of the Internet, and encouraging consumer economies will be the web's greatest allies and will produce great business opportunities on the Internet.

These forces are already at work in Asia, for example. As a result, the market for Internet and online services in Asia will top \$1.4 Billion by the year 2002. Market research firms estimate that commerce on the web will top \$220-\$327 Bil-

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## Networking basics, save you the headache

By Omar Qawas

Special to The Star

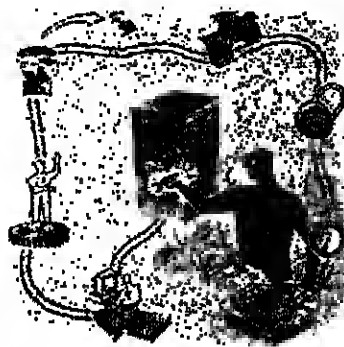
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY is what makes it or breaks it for today's companies, no matter what role of business the company is in. Therefore, one of the most crucial aspects of setting up a business is having a tightly integrated computer network that works to enhance the workflow and augment information databases.

Due to the formidable rate of advancements in technology, most businesses simply couldn't keep up, hence a wide array of operating systems, PC-compatibles, Macs, etc. The fact of the matter is that even if one wanted to keep up with all the advances in computer technology, it would be practically impossible. The better approach would be to structure the network in such a way as to allow for dynamic upgrades and enhancements without compromising the budget especially if you're lucky enough to have the task of building a network from scratch.

**Conception.** This is the word that frequently comes up when discussing problems with any networking system. In order to avoid expansion problems, a design plan should be thought out well in advance to allow for at least a 50 percent growth in network capacity. An initial investment in modular-type trunks and nodes will save a lot on future expansion where cables have to be gutted out and new trunks installed.

**2. Reliable server and networking hardware.** Without these, the network could be down more times than you would like, hence costing the company valuable working time, let alone the support costs if you don't have a network administrator in-house.

**3. Internet access.** For connectivity and invaluable resources, the Internet is something you



cannot do without nowadays, especially if you have employees in the field with which you need to have an open line of communication, thereby reducing communication costs considerably. The required bandwidth for access depends directly on the level of interaction with the Internet (and usually it's never enough), but a 28.8-64.4 Kbit/Sec connection is sufficient for small to medium sized networks.

**4. Pre-season Training.** Ensuring a smoothly running operation requires adequately trained personnel, since most of the network related support issues result from people's technological ignorance causing some users to actually damage certain components.

**Birth.** Regular maintenance and backup. Keeping data intact and streamlined by regular defragmentation and error scanning is a must, while setting up a system policy for regular data backup on cyclic parts (twice a minimum, weekly and monthly), for those networks that are data intensive. For NT servers, Disk-keeper (http://www.execsoft.com) does a great job of keeping defragmentation low, and it can be scheduled to do so unattended at night when network usage is at a minimum.

**2. Virus protection and system integrity.** The "better safe than sorry" rule applies here to the letter. The choice of anti-virus software is varied (Dr. Solomon's, Norton, Symantec, for NT servers, etc.), but the general rule to work with is to keep the workstations clean, by installing an active virus monitor on each workstation, and by enforcing a strict policy regarding the use of disks from outside the office.

**3. Access control.** Create a hierarchy for your network operators/users, and enforce strict password rules for everyone. Hacking into a computer network generally occurs due to someone's carelessness, with their password, either by writing it down somewhere, or simply by giving it to someone else because "he just needed to print a file, so what harm could that do?"

**Growth.** Go Intranet! One of the biggest problems of computer networking was interoperability, with the Internet as a stupendous success and thriving example, there is no reason not to switch over to an 'open' system where the only dependency is on the browser being used. Minimum learning curves, reduced software-related expenditure, efficient flow of information, minimum technical support are only some of the advantages of an Intranet, in name a few. Moreover, the beauty of an Intranet is that you don't have to do away with currently operating computers, be they Macs or PCs, Pentium Pros or 486s. They will all fit into the newer scheme of things (worst case scenario would be that you'll have to upgrade the RAM for some of them).

A helpful site for Internet related information would be http://www.wordmark.com, so fire up your browser and start learning... HTML, XML, JAVA, Active-X... it's only the beginning! ■

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